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# MENTAL AND MORAL CULTURE,

[2507]

AND

# POPULAR EDUCATION;

BY

S. S. RANDALL,
GENERAL DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

---

INCLUDING A SPECIAL REPORT
ON
COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES,
PREPARED IN PURSUANCE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS;
BY
HENRY S. RANDALL,
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF CORTLAND COUNTY.

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# INTRODUCTION.

In the present awakened state of the public mind in reference to Education, every thing connected with a subject of such magnitude and importance becomes peculiarly interesting. The indifference which has heretofore prevailed in reference to our institutions of elementary instruction is indeed surprising, but not more so than the disregard manifested towards a variety of other subjects connected with the developement and cultivation of the intellectual and moral faculties of our nature. The truth is, the great principles which lie at the foundation of the mental improvement of our species have not been brought home to the masses of the community, with a force at all proportional to their importance, or in a manner adapted to their clear comprehension. The most ignorant are, in general, the most selfish; and even in those rare cases where no higher motives can be appealed to than those of individual and personal interest, serious inquiry, followed by energetic action in the direction leading to the portals of knowledge and wisdom, will be almost sure to ensue from a skilful application of the selfish principle to the objects, means, and ends of existence. Convince the man who aspires to nothing higher than mere worldly wealth, and who apparently lives for no other or greater object than the gratification of his animal nature, that the enjoyment of uninterrupted health depends upon the observance of certain conditions, the greater part of which are subject to his own control, and he becomes at once a student of physiology, and will, in due time, in all human probability, ascend in the scale of intellect and civilization, until he becomes an enlightened and useful member of society. Convince him, also, that the uniform practice of virtue and morality, in all the varied relations of life, is not only compatible with the acquisition and enjoyment of wealth, and the rational gratification of the physical appetites and wants, but absolutely indispensable to their continued and secure enjoyment, and he becomes at once a moral and benevolent man. In like manner,

convince the most careless and indifferent individual that the present and future happiness of his children is placed in a great measure at his own disposal; that, at every stage of their progress towards the maturity of manhood, it is in his power to give such a direction to their ductile minds as will, in all probability, insure their welfare in all coming time, while it promotes their present enjoyment; and that, for any neglect in the judicious exercise of the immense power thus conferred, the penalty will be visited upon him in the shape of bodily and mental sufferings endured by his offspring as the direct and inevitable consequence of such neglect;—let him be well and thoroughly convinced of all this, and he becomes a most efficient and intelligent promoter of every institution for popular education. Add to this a conviction that nine tenths of all the children of the republic in which he lives receive the greater part of their *intellectual* (we cannot say their physical and moral) education in the primary institutions of learning; that his own children must, throughout their future life, breathe the atmosphere of a public opinion to be formed and sustained by those whose mental discipline is thus matured; and that, by the influence which he may exert, in connection with those by whom he is surrounded, those institutions, instead of being nurseries of idleness, immorality, or, at best, of barren elementary *instruction*, may become the temples wherein the beaming innocence of spotless childhood may be clothed with knowledge, and wisdom, and virtue, day by day and hour by hour, without parting with its sinless purity of nature;—let these facts and these principles be impressed upon the mind of the most selfish and worldly man community contains within its bosom, and he becomes a practical *reformer* in the much abused and greatly perverted system of COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION.

We are accustomed to complain that, in a great majority of instances, our primary schools are lamentably inefficient; that they have utterly failed to accomplish the objects for which they were designed; that they have miserably disappointed the hopes and expectations which were formed from their introduction and diffusion broadcast throughout our land. But we forget to ask whence arises this deplorable state of things; and, what is still more culpable, we neglect to inquire whether the remedy is in our power, and, if so, what it is. If the husbandman should sow his field, in every direction, with the choicest grain, and should thenceforth abandon it to its fate, or, at best, look on with a cool indifference and neglect to its progress, should we be surprised at the compara-

tive failure and inefficiency of his crop? True, the founders of our institutions were at immense pains in laying broad and deep the foundations of primary instruction; and had their descendants faithfully and conscientiously coöperated in their enlightened views in this respect, and carried up the superstructure in its admirable and beautiful proportions, our country would have been advanced at least a century in all those intellectual and moral qualifications which adorn humanity. But the eager prosecution of wealth, the active spirit of speculation, the immense variety of material interests necessarily incidental to the developement of the vast resources of a rapidly expanding civilization in a mighty hemisphere, hitherto comparatively unpeopled, and the diversified combinations resulting from the pressing claims of self-interest and personal and political ambition;—all these predominating motives impelled to a course of action, and originated and maintained a public sentiment, essentially independent of the claims of primary education, as that term is now beginning to be understood. The common schools, the high schools, the academy, the college, and the university, all, indeed, existed. Outwardly, their organization was as perfect as circumstances would admit. For successive generations, the greater part of the children of the republic were duly transferred from the nursery to the district or free school, thence, at the proper time, to the high school and the academy, and finally "finished their education" at the college or the university. For all the active and practical purposes of life, they were thenceforth deemed abundantly prepared. In all this routine, thus universally followed and universally countenanced, the two most important and predominating divisions of our nature—those which give the hue to the whole of future life, and determine its destination—the physical and moral attributes, formed no part of the discipline of education, and only occasionally entered into it, when, by a fortunate concurrence of events, the strong common sense and wholesome training of the domestic circle were taken up and carried on in the halls of science. The intellectual faculties were, indeed, partially developed; but in the general absence of sound moral aliment on which to act, the higher sentiments were left to take such direction as the propensities and appetites might suggest, controlled only by the operations of a public sentiment, which, however it might restrain within due bounds the grosser and more violent passions, admitted full latitude to the play of many of the lower attributes of our nature. In short, our systems of popular education, from the lowest to the highest,

have been little better than *mere* systems, beautiful in theory, affording felicitous subjects for self-gratulation at our public anniversaries, but essentially destitute of that living principle which acts upon, and elevates and refines to its greatest possible degree, the physical, the intellectual, the moral and religious faculties.

To remedy this predominant evil, it is, first of all, necessary that we should be fully aware not only of its existence, but of its extent. If the source is corrupt, we have no right to expect, at any stage of progress, those pure and invigorating influences which can be the result only of an uncontaminated origin. In the vast majority of instances, the young mind receives its most abiding impressions from the various influences with which it is immediately surrounded; from its first lessons of man and nature, of intellect and morals—lessons not written in sand, and swept away by the passing breeze, but deeply and ineradicably engraven upon the tablets of memory. There are formed those habits, principles, sentiments, and modes of thinking, feeling, and acting, which will inevitably characterize the future man. It is of the first importance, therefore, to trace these interesting developements as they are successively unfolded, and to ascertain under what influences they are best drawn out, and in what manner their progressive growth may best be secured.

This has been the object which the author has proposed to himself in the following pages; and, however imperfectly he has succeeded, he has, at least, the satisfaction of believing that his motives will be appreciated by those for whom he has labored. He has sought to direct the attention of the young to considerations intimately connected with their physical, moral, and intellectual education, and the formation of their character, and to point out the facilities, as well as obstacles, to mental culture, which are presented by the varying circumstances of their condition in life, by the institutions of society, and by public sentiment. If this object shall have been accomplished,—if, through his humble efforts, a right direction shall have been given to any inquiring and ingenuous mind,—his utmost ambition will have been attained.

# MENTAL AND MORAL CULTURE.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

1. The present state of physical, intellectual, and moral science marks one of those grand and distinct epochs in the progress of civilization, which are destined to exert an immense influence upon the future. Its distinguishing aim may, perhaps, be defined to be, the attainment of a harmonious combination and judicious cultivation of all the faculties of our nature. Hitherto the physical constitution of man, and the influences which are constantly exerted upon its peculiar organization by the external world, have been regarded as the objects of a separate and distinct science, dependent upon principles peculiar to itself, and related only incidentally to mental or moral manifestation. The intellectual powers have, in like manner, been made the basis of a philosophy of their own; and have given rise to numerous metaphysical systems, too often abstruse in their conceptions, profitless in their details, and fruitless in their results. Moral philosophy too has, in every age, had its professors, who have vainly attempted to sound the depths, compass the nature,

and direct the mighty but wayward energies of the human soul. In the cultivation of each of these sciences, separate and distinct from its indissoluble connection with the others, insuperable obstacles have from time to time been presented; and a clear and satisfactory conception of the nature and offices, the powers and capabilities of the human mind, considered in all its various relations, has never by this process been attained.

2. The most scientific, thorough, and practical acquaintance with the physical organization of the body, and of the effect produced upon it by external subtances, obviously affords but an incomplete means of solution of the diversified phenomena constantly presented in the constitution of our complex nature. In order to arrive at satisfactory results in this ample field of inquiry, a knowledge of the various influences which the intellectual and moral faculties exert upon the physical, and of the effects of their combined operations under circumstances continually modified and changed by the constantly changing surface of human events and individual peculiarities of character, is indispensably requisite. Nor can the process of intellectual developement and expansion be correctly apprehended, or wisely directed, without an enlightened appreciation as well of the physical organization as of the moral tendencies, culture, and character of the individual who is the subject of mental discipline. So, too, with the teachings of the moralist and the divine. Elevated and sublime as is, and ever must be, that science which deals with the highest and noblest attributes of humanity, it is lamentably true that its progress and success has hitherto been in no degree commensurate with its importance. Confining itself to the moral and religious nature of man, and rightly assuming, as its standard of attainment, the capacity of

that nature for indefinite improvement, it has nevertheless failed to appreciate the ceaseless pressure of diversified external circumstances, and the constant and powerful modifications of the intellectual and moral faculties, which result from physical organization, and the harmonious or discordant play of its complicated and delicate mechanism. It has dealt too much in vague abstractions and general principles, and too little with the world as it really is. The strongest convictions of the intellect have often been found wholly insufficient to counterpoise the powerful influence of the passions, especially when aided by an unfavorable combination of external circumstances. The most incontrovertible principles of duty, and the soundest dictates of moral and religious truth, are wasted upon that mental soil not previously adapted to their reception by the proper cultivation and supremacy of the higher sentiments. The infinite diversity of human character—the innumerable and depressing physical evils with which mankind have always been compelled to contend — the various operations of the passions and propensities of our common nature, under different combinations of circumstances and events — and the ceaseless modifications of the vast and complicated machinery of society constantly revolving around us — should long since have demonstrated the necessity of an enlightened appreciation of all the various influences, which in the economy of human life are brought to bear upon the formation and developement of character. No permanent advancement of the standard of moral virtue, purity, and truth can reasonably be expected, but through a long and thorough discipline of the whole diversified nature of man; by clearly unfolding the intimate connection of his duty with his highest interest as well for time as eternity—of the require-

ments of his Creator with his own present and prospective happiness — and the proper fulfilment of his high destiny, with the harmonious action of every faculty of his being.

3. These principles constitute the foundation of the great work of Education : And it is mainly because they have not been fully understood, or their practical importance correctly estimated, that, comparatively, so little has hitherto been accomplished for the elevation and improvement of the race. And yet we should be guilty of an unjustifiable presumption in assuming that an acquaintance with the fundamental powers and faculties of our nature, and with the intimate relation, which in their united action they sustain to the external world as well of matter as of mind, has not at all times and in all ages been accessible to those for whose happiness such powers were conferred, and for whose benefit such relations exist. It is inconsistent with all our conceptions of that wisdom and benevolence, which pervades the great scheme of things and the dealings of the Creator, to suppose that the observance of certain fixed and invariable laws is necessary to the well-being of the race, individually and collectively, and yet that the means of ascertaining and applying those laws have been withheld. Such a conclusion would be at variance with all the facts which history, observation, and experience have presented to our view. In tracing the progress of civilization through its various stages of advancement, one of the most remarkable phenomena which presents itself, is the slow process by which many of the cardinal principles of knowledge have been matured and established. The elementary materials of the physical world, from which those innumerable combinations of science and the arts, now so familiarly applied, were compounded, have at all times existed, and their

innate properties, powers, and capabilities have been uniformly the same; and yet the most important discoveries and valuable inventions, connected with the welfare and progressive improvement of the race, owe their origin to a period comparatively recent. The same sources of observation which conducted the penetrating minds of Galileo and Newton to a knowledge of the laws which regulate the motions of the heavenly bodies had been open to millions of intelligent and reflecting beings, since the world began; and although numerous systems and countless theories had prevailed, a just appreciation of uniform facts and a clear conception of their relations and dependencies had not been attained. One of the most simple and important principles of our animal economy, — the circulation of the blood, — remained unknown until the commencement of the seventeenth century; and yet the inductions, which led the mind of Harvey to its developement were accessible to the observation of every scientific mind of the ancient and modern world. A similar remark is applicable to the more recent discoveries of the nature and functions of the nervous system, by that indefatigable scholar and enlightened physiologist, Sir Charles Bell. Four centuries have not yet elapsed since the discovery of the art of printing and the invention of the mariner's compass so immeasurably facilitated the spread of knowledge, and the annunciation of the existence of a new world opened to the minds of men an inexhaustible source of social, intellectual, and moral power. The ample volume of nature has, at all times, been open to the study and observation of mankind; and her instructive lessons have ever been ready abundantly to gratify the highest interest of her votaries; and yet the records of human improvement, worthy of the name, may be comprised within the limits of a few centuries. Indeed after the lapse of nearly six

thousand years we can scarcely be said to have penetrated beyond the vestibule of the great temple of knowledge. The essential conditions, however, upon which the well-being of the race have been dependent, in all ages and under all the diversified circumstances in which humanity has ever existed, has nevertheless been placed within the comprehension of every responsible individual of the species.

4. The present may be regarded as emphatically the age of improvement—of progress—of advancement in physical, intellectual, and especially in moral science. The human mind, diverted for a season from the destructive and degrading physical contests waged by ambition, pride and passion for supremacy and power, has passed by a rapid transition through the wide circle of the arts and sciences to a systematic and enlightened examination of its own intrinsic nature, capacities, wants, and destination. From its comprehensive survey of the external universe, its analysis of the properties of matter, its combinations of the innumerable substances of the material world, and its subjection of the physical powers of nature to the various purposes of an advancing civilization —it has ascended to the great source of all knowledge and all power, and traced its own derivation from the spirit of the universe—its innate capabilities—its progressive expansion—its boundless aspirations, and its immortality. From a survey of its own history, in all the diversified forms of its developement from the dawn of ancient civilization through the thick mists of ignorance, superstition and error to the present advanced condition of society, it is beginning to deduce those great elementary truths which lie at the foundation of a wise and enlightened philosophy—truths originally implanted by

the Creator on its uncorrupted tablets; truths asserted and re-asserted in every age of its experience by the few who were capable of discerning, through the surrounding darkness, the imperishable landmarks of humanity; truths yet destined to regenerate the race, and render it worthy of its divine origin and nature.

5. The communication of a knowledge of these truths in their simplicity and purity to the rising generation, in such a manner as to enable them intelligently to appreciate and rightly to apply them to all the practical purposes of life and to the promotion of the true end of their being, is the great object of education. Rightly comprehending the primal source of all the wretchedness and desolation which have withered the energies and blighted the hopes of mankind, the christian, the patriot, the philanthropist, and the statesman now propose to purify the stream at its fountain; to rescue the beautiful innocence of childhood from contamination; early to instruct the intellect and strengthen the principles of those, who in their turn are to carry forward the destinies of humanity; carefully to remove those fatal obstacles, upon which the fondest hopes and most flattering anticipations have so often and so calamitously been wrecked; and earnestly and efficiently to apply themselves to the wide dissemination of those enduring truths of civilization and christianity, which alone can enable man to resume his appropriate station as the intelligent and responsible recipient and dispenser of knowledge, virtue, and happiness. It must, however, constantly be borne in mind that it is upon the ability and the disposition wisely and judiciously to profit by this knowledge, and to render it available to the great purposes of rational existence, rather than upon the extent or comprehensiveness of the knowledge

itself, however accurate, that our attainments in the true philosophy of life must essentially depend.

6. To him who rightly appreciates the intrinsic value, the vast capabilities and high destination of the human mind, no consideration can be more solemn or momentous than that of the responsibility involved in its constitution. We are, indeed, 'fearfully and wonderfully made'—not alone with reference to our merely physical organization, complicated and perfect as we know that crowning workmanship of the Almighty hand to be—but chiefly and more especially in that inexplicable and mysterious union of mind and matter which connects our animal frame with the spirit of the universe—elevates us in the magnificent scale of creative wisdom to a station 'a little lower than the angels'—and calls upon us to aspire to that perfection of character which alone can enable us to fulfil the objects of our existence. Nor is this high responsibility thus devolved upon us, in any degree lessened, or its requisitions modified, by the general prevalence of degenerate views and erroneous conceptions of our origin, duties and destination—by the disturbing influences which surround us on every hand, or the manifold temptations which encompass our progress, and constantly urge us to diverge from the narrow path of truth and duty. The standard of rectitude is imperishable and eternal. It varies not with the incessant vicissitudes of erring humanity; and wherever a human being exists, conformity to its requirements is absolutely essential to happiness and permanent well-being. Reason and revelation combine to assure us that in the bestowment of the inappreciable boon of humanity, the Creator designed to confer upon us as its legitimate end, the highest degree of happiness and enjoyment of which our nature is susceptible. Our physical structure in all its parts is admirably adap-

ted to the entire constitution of our being; and the highest effort of human wisdom is inadequate to the execution, or even the conception of the slightest improvement in the exquisite mechanism of those organic functions, from the harmonious play of which we derive the abiding consciousness and the full enjoyment of our animal existence. The same perfection of organic structure pervades the infinite and incomprehensible variety of animal life, throughout every portion of the universe within the scope of our most extended observation. All the orders of being below humanity accomplish unerringly the specific objects for which they were designed. It is from those attributes alone, which constitute our proper humanity, that we derive the fearful power of transgression; and with it that responsibility for the appropriate exercise of our intellectual and moral faculties, which necessarily results from the relation of the creature to the Creator.

7. All degrees of animal and vegetable life below humanity, are created originally perfect; with powers, faculties and instincts adapted to the peculiar scale of being they are destined to occupy—neither requiring nor admitting cultivation—and incapable by the very constitution of their nature of transcending or violating in any essential respect the fundamental conditions of their existence. Man alone of all the inhabitants of our planet, is created with the power of improving indefinitely his condition—of transgressing by a voluntary effort of his will, the laws of his being, and of counteracting, if we may be allowed to use the expression, so far as he himself is concerned, the benevolent design of his Creator, in the bestowment of the high privilege of an intelligent existence. With him alone the work of education and the formation of character commences in early infancy, and is susceptible of continued pro-

gress through all the subsequent stages of life. He alone possesses that indestructible germ of being which we term the soul or spirit—the badge of his proper humanity—the pledge of his immortality—the distinctive characteristic of his high nature. The external avenues of communication with the world of matter and of mind are possessed by him in common with the inferior animals. The rays of light are conveyed to them, as to him, through the medium of the eye: the vibrations of the air which constitute sound, are communicated through the same organs of hearing: the same faculties of touch, of taste and of smell, are conferred upon them by an organization substantially similar to his own; and each of these senses are possessed by various species of the animal creation in greater perfection, and with a more extended scope of action than by him. Most, if not all the perceptive faculties—those which take cognizance of the forms, hues, dimensions and localities of external nature—which discover and discern existences—note events as they occur—recall impressions and furnish the various materials for the exercise of reason and judgment in man, are possessed by the brutes; and in them their various functions are regulated by an unerring instinct.

8. As the animal organization approaches in complexity and perfection to the human, the sphere of intellectual action is proportionably expanded, and the range of the propensities and affective emotions, with which it is also endowed, elevated and enlarged. These propensities and emotions likewise correspond in a considerable degree to those of man. It is the same animal instinct in both which prompts to anger, violence, strife and carnage: the same in both which incites to deception, concealment and theft: the same in both which induces a disregard of the interests and feelings of others, and a concentration of every

energy upon self: the same in both which impels to covetousness and cunning,—in short, the same in both, which in its unregulated and unrestrained action has emphatically

'Brought death into the world, and all our woe.'

In the brute creation these propensities subserve a wise and specific purpose: they are restrained within impassable bounds: and their exercise constitutes the ultimate end and the greatest happiness of their possessors. Upon man too, these propensities were conferred by Omniscient Wisdom for the attainment of beneficial ends: but upon him was bestowed a higher and nobler order of faculties to which they were designed to be subservient, and by which they were intended to be restrained; and that impassable barrier which renders transgression and its fatal consequences physically impossible to the brute, finds no place in his mental or moral organization. The higher attributes of his being—the capacity to reason and to decide by an intelligent appreciation and comparison of conflicting motives, objects, ends and aims—the power of widening the sphere and dispersing the mists of his intellectual vision—and of so disciplining his moral sense as to render his conduct practically subservient to the will of his Creator, and in harmonious accordance with the design of his existence—these belong to man alone: and their exercise to a greater or less extent, or their total neglect, and the abandonment of the reins of intellect, judgment and conscience to the guidance of the passions, and the impulse of circumstance, determine the character and shape the destiny of each individual of the human family.

9. In this power, resulting from the union of the spiritual and material portions of our being, and in the consequent responsibility which its exercise in-

volves, consists the highest and noblest attribute of humanity. The intellectual and moral faculties of our nature cannot assume and retain a stationary position. There is no mental equilibrium, in which knowledge, and the various passions and emotions can rest, undisturbed by any impulse or preponderance from without or within. In the cultivation and discipline of our mind, in all its complicated relations, we must continually advance, or we shall be irresistibly compelled to recede. We have no alternative, other than a progress in virtue, in knowledge and in goodness, on the one hand, and a failure on the other, not only to accomplish that full measure of happiness and enjoyment designed by the Creator in our formation, but in any considerable degree to apprehend the end and object of existence itself, or to avoid the innumerable calamities physical and moral, incidental to ignorance and error. In what manner then, may we best discipline our whole nature, so as to accomplish to the greatest practicable extent the will of our Creator—fulfil the objects and purposes of our being—cultivate and develope the various faculties of our mind—and fit ourselves for usefulness and enjoyment in the circumstances which surround us, and the respective stations in which it may be our fortune to be placed?

## CHAPTER II.

## PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND MORAL CULTURE.

1. In our endeavors to ascertain the true mode of developing the powers and faculties of the mind, with a view to a systematic education of the whole of our compound nature, it is first of all necessary to acquaint ourselves with the fundamental principles of that nature. On no subject has a greater diversity of opinion prevailed, than on that of the nature and essence of the human mind; and on no subject, certainly, have the materials for observation been more ample and abundant. In addition to the consciousness which each intelligent individual possesses, of the operations of his own mind, a vast field of instruction is daily presented in the conduct and character of others, and an inexhaustible repository of facts illustrative of this great subject exists in the annals of history. And yet if we may, even now, be permitted to congratulate ourselves upon the possession of an enlightened and practical philosophy of the mind, the period is quite recent since a thorough analysis of its various faculties, and a satisfactory elucidation of its nature and powers, ceased to be a desideratum in the acquisitions of science. Metaphysicians, it is true, have abounded in every age; and as intelligence and civilization have advanced, a perceptible progress has been made in psychological inquiries; while the frequent revolutions which the opinions of scientific men have undergone, and the varying and even opposite standards which have from time to time prevailed, have afforded the most conclusive evidence, that the solid foundations

of truth and nature were yet to be reached. In the expressive language of De Bonald, an author whose views on this subject are cited with approbation by Dugald Stewart at the close of the eighteenth century, 'diversity of doctrine has increased from age to age, with the number of masters, and with the progress of knowledge; and Europe, which at present possesses libraries filled with philosophical works, and which reckons up almost as many philosophers as writers—poor in the midst of so much riches—and uncertain, in the midst of all its guides, which road it should follow—Europe, the centre and focus of all the lights of the world, has yet its philosophy only in expectation.'

2. Independently of revelation, we can form no accurate conception of the abstract nature and essence of the human mind. The various speculations on this subject, in which men in all ages have allowed themselves to indulge, have subserved no other profitable end than to demonstrate the utter inability of the profoundest intellect to solve the deep problem of its own existence. While we recognise the presence and operation of intellectual and moral faculties elevating us in the scale of creation immeasurably above the purely animal orders of existence, the utmost exertion of those faculties, unaided by inspiration, can neither communicate to us any definite conception of their origin, nor inform us of their peculiar nature, distinct from the material organization with which, in this life, we find them connected. It is only by observing and noting their manifestation in various individuals and under every combination of external circumstances, and by carefully discriminating between fundamental powers, dispositions and propensities, and their diversified modifications in conduct and character, that we can hope to attain to accurate results in the investigation of the numerous

mental phenomena presented to our view. We shall best consult the dictates of a sound philosophy by confining our researches to facts presented by the history of the race, or open to general observation, instead of wandering into those obscure regions of metaphysical subtlety which bewilder the intellect, without either enlightening the understanding or convincing the judgment.

3. Whatever may be the nature or essence, the origin or destination of the human mind, the Creator has seen fit to assign the body as its earthly residence. Whether we term it soul or spirit—the heart or the mind—reason, thought, intellect, understanding, conscience or will—it can manifest itself in our present state of existence, only through the agency of material organs. Christianity, indeed, enables us to anticipate the final triumph of mind over matter, and to expect the emancipation of our higher nature from the grosser elements which now repress and fetter its immortal energies. But the dark portals of the tomb must first be passed. Here, the connection which Infinite Wisdom has established between physical organization and mental developement is, in its very nature, indissoluble; and the elements of our being are so intermingled, that the purely material portion of our nature exerts a constant and powerful influence over that which, in itself, is purely immaterial and spiritual. When the one, either in consequence of a violation of its organic laws, or by gradual decay and dissolution becomes no longer capable of discharging its functions in accordance with the constitution of its nature, the other ceases, to all human observation, its accustomed operations, and suspends its powers.

4. There is no condition of humanity in which the mind can manifest itself independently of the

body; nor is there any wherein a derangement of the physical structure of the brain, the acknowledged seat of reason, intellect, and thought, does not affect, in precise proportion to the extent and magnitude of the injury, the moral and intellectual faculties of the mind. We are not at liberty, therefore, in our investigations respecting what we deem the nobler portion of our common nature, to separate those mysterious but harmonious elements which God himself has joined. In the vain and fruitless attempt to effect this divorce, the strongest intellects have found themselves bewildered amid the tangled mazes of a philosophy which has sought by earnest contemplation of an isolated part of 'one stupendous whole' to extract a system of ethics adapted to the great purposes of human life. Rather let us study the laws of our being, where alone the knowledge is to be attained, from a contemplation of our whole nature, and from the unerring dictates of Revelation, whether transmitted to us by the direct interposition of the Deity, through the record of our common faith, or communicated in the thousand voices which speak to us daily and hourly from the manifold works of creative wisdom, goodness and power. The body, equally with the soul, is the product of the Divine hand. It came from its Creator, the perfect and fit temple of its godlike inhabitant—exquisitely adapted in its most minute details, as well as in the general result of its structure to the communication and diffusion of enjoyment; and it is only from our ignorance of its true nature, and our repeated and continued departures from the laws impressed upon its constitution, that the discordant play of its organs becomes the fertile source of suffering, disorder and pain:—

'Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.'

5. An early and intelligent acquaintance with the constitution, structure and functions of the human frame; the laws in obedience to which only, health may be preserved and secured, and the mind enabled to accomplish its noble mission, undepressed by the disheartening influences of debility, disease and pain; the organic functions of the various muscles, bones, nerves, vessels and ligatures which are distributed throughout the body, and the principles in conformity to which the action of each and the combined operations of all are regulated—is indispensable to an enlightened developement and judicious cultivation of our whole nature. The able and accomplished Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, the Hon. Horace Mann, in his Sixth Annual Report, has accumulated a mass of facts bearing upon this important and elementary process of education, and has enforced its claims to a more general and universal adoption in all our seminaries of public and private instruction, with an eloquence, a beauty and a truth, which cannot fail to carry conviction to every intelligent mind. 'The laws of health and life,' observes this distinguished advocate of Popular Education, and of the best interests of humanity, 'are comparatively few and simple. Every person is capable of understanding them. Every child in the State before arriving at the age of eighteen years might acquire a competent knowledge of them, and of the reasons on which they are founded. The profession of medicine, on the other hand, is mainly conversant with the laws of disease. It is these which are so numberless and complex as to defy the profoundest talent, and the study of the longest and most assiduous life for their thorough comprehension. Every difference of climate, of occupation, of personal constitution and habits, modifies their character, multiplies their number and perplexes

their intricacy. Human Physiology, or the science of health and life, may be written in one book; for Pathology, or the science of disease, thousands and ten thousands of books have been written, and yet the subject seems at the present time to be hardly nearer exhaustion than in the age of Galen or Hippocrates.' A proper regard to the quantity and quality of diet, of clothing, of air, and exercise; a scrupulous attention to cleanliness; a temperate and discriminating use of all the blessings of Providence, whether conferred upon us for the sustenance and support of animal life, or for the varied purposes of social intercourse and moral and intellectual progress; and an intelligent appreciation of the diversified effects of temperature, climate, and atmospheric changes upon different constitutions, and at different periods of life, would unquestionably prove eminently conducive to longevity,—add to the capacity of the human race for happiness and enjoyment,—advance the standard of mental and moral improvement,—and mitigate essentially, if it did not ultimately eradicate, the numerous and harassing physical ills 'which flesh is heir to.' That this important branch of mental culture has so long been almost entirely overlooked, not only in our systems of education, but in the speculations of philosophy and the exhortations of the pulpit, argues an inexplicable blindness to the cardinal interests of human knowledge, and a strange infatuation, which in its zeal for the promotion of ulterior objects has neglected the first and most obvious means for their successful accomplishment. The dark catalogue of mortality, and the annals of human suffering, wretchedness and misery, have been fearfully enhanced by the prevailing ignorance of the simple and intelligible principles of physiological science; and what is still more lamentable, the ravages of death and the apparently undiscriminating

visitations of calamity and affliction, have originated and sustained the most erroneous and pernicious theories of the moral government of that over-ruling Providence, who 'doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men,' and whose 'chastenings, though for the present not joyous but grievous, afterward yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby.' We may develop to a preternatural activity the intellectual faculties of our children; and by a species of hot-house discipline be able to exhibit to the wondering gaze of our friends, youthful prodigies of genius and talent. But the bitter experience of many an agonized and bereaved parent has demonstrated that triumphs like these are too evanescent and too dearly bought. Exhausted nature soon asserts its supremacy, and vindicates its violated laws. The over-tasked brain gives way before the unnatural supply of nervous energy which has been forced to it, and a premature grave claims the victim of a misdirected education. Instead of incouraging, it is obviously the part of true wisdom studiously to repress the undue manifestations of intellectual power, at an age when the physical organs have not yet attained that consistency, strength, durability and harmony, which alone can fit them for coöperating with the mind. The foundations of education, to be permanent and durable, must consist in a systematic, thorough and judicious invigoration of the physical constitution. We may not, it is true, by the most strict conformity to the organic laws, be able wholly to avert the ravages of disease, or to obtain an entire exemption from the physical ills incident to humanity. Were we even at liberty to conceive of such an advancement in knowledge and science, at any future period of the race, as should enable us to cope with pestilence in its multiform and desolating influences, to grapple with and over-

come those innumerable diseases which now steal upon us when least expected, and against which no human skill or prescience can avail—that period is undoubtedly far remote. There are disturbing influences in the air we breathe—in the earth upon which we tread—in all the elements, in short, which surround us—there are disturbing influences in the very blood which courses through our veins, and in the constitution of our physical and mental organs, which no human power known to us can wholly neutralize or command. But it is much, very much, to know and to understand the fixed laws impressed upon our nature by the hand of Omnipotent wisdom and benevolence; to be able, so far as in us lies, to guard against their infringment, to carry out their design, and thus secure a comparative exemption from those debilitating influences which make up so great a portion of the cup of human wretchedness. It is much to understand and appreciate the intimate connection between bodily health and mental efficiency—a connection which has been too long and too systematically disregarded. It is much to be able to dissipate the deplorable ignorance which has consigned to a premature grave so many highly gifted minds upon whom the fondest hopes of the domestic and social circle hung, and around whom clustered the most sanguine anticipations for the future. It is much to substitute for the forbidding and destructive system of precocious mental culture with which we have heretofore been so generally met at the very portals of knowledge and education, the pleasing and unrestrained exercise of those muscular functions, whose activity in the spring time of life, it is impossible wholly to repress, and the gratification of that insatiable thirst for instruction and information so apparent in the young mind, by the observation of the countless phenomena of nature.

For a more full and satisfactory exposition of this important and indispensable branch of elementary education, we must refer the inquirer, in addition to the valuable report to which we have already alluded, to the admirable works of the Messrs. COMBE of Edinburgh, which have obtained so high a reputation, and which have contributed, probably more than any other publications on this subject, to a general diffusion of the fundamental principles of sound physiological, as well as mental and moral science. The masterly treatises of GEORGE COMBE on the 'Constitution of Man,' and on 'Moral Philosophy,' and the no less able work of ANDREW COMBE on the 'Principles of Physiology applied to the Preservation of Health and to the Improvement of Physical and Mental Education,' can scarcely be too highly commended to the students and the instructers of our common schools and higher institutions of learning, and to the attentive perusal of every individual who desires to become acquainted with the capacities and the laws of his being. No system of education can be perfect which is not based upon an enlightened knowledge of the science—for science it may well be called—which is discussed in these attractive publications. None is worthy of the name which does not keep its great truths constantly in view; and no philanthropist, no friend to humanity, and no individual who desires to ameliorate and to elevate the physical, the mental and moral condition of the race, will withhold his influence and exertions to disseminate these principles far and wide. Ignorance of the elementary principles which regulate the physical well-being of our common nature is no longer excusable in those who undertake the task of instruction; and especially is it the duty, no less than the interest of parents, to familiarize themselves with a subject, a correct knowledge of which is of such

surpassing importance to the happiness and welfare of those to whom, as they have given them existence, so they are bound to render that existence, so far as in them lies, a source of enjoyment, advancement and mental purity. The rapid progress of physiological science, and the more general diffusion of enlightened views upon the reciprocal influences of the physical and mental portions of our nature, have thus placed at the command of all, the means of that intelligent and habitual conformity to the conditions of health, which shall fully realize the desirable combination of 'a sound mind in a sound body.' The wondrous and complicated adaptation of the 'temple of the soul' to the various purposes, physical, intellectual and moral, which its Great Architect designed it to subserve, surely affords one of the grandest and most exalted, as well as interesting themes for study and reflection.

6. We proceed to the higher and more comprehensive domain of the mind itself, the fundamental faculties of which have, by the general consent of metaphysicians and psychologists, been classed into two principal divisions, distinguished as the intellectual and the moral. To the former have been assigned the functions of gathering from the external world of matter and of mind, the various stores of knowledge—analyzing, classifying and arranging the treasures of science and experience, and placing them at the disposal of the judgment and the will; while to the latter have been assigned, on the one hand, those higher and nobler sentiments, which, in their legitimate action, aided by the clear light of the unclouded intellect, fulfil the moral law of the Creator and delight to know and to do his will; and on the other the lower passions and propensities, each having its appropriate and beneficial function in the economy of being, but liable to be perverted from its proper

sphere, and when so perverted, endowed with a fearful power for evil.

7. In order to a proper appreciation of truth, whether with reference to the phenomena of the external world, or to those complicated operations of thought, feeling and passion, which shape the character and round the destiny of every human being, the intellect must be enlightened. Its cultivation accordingly, is not only a duty, but speedily becomes a pleasure. To those accustomed to the indulgence of literary and scientific pursuits, it is often a luxury, compared with which the most attractive allurements of the senses sink into insignificance. That is indeed a noble and a glorious prerogative, which enables us to accumulate and appropriate the rich stores of ancient and modern wisdom; to travel back to the primeval annals of mankind, and trace the varying fortunes of the race from its incipient efforts at civilization, through the labyrinths of ignorance, error, delusion, crime and suffering; to follow the progress of invention and discovery in the arts and sciences; to accompany the great, the good, the learned, and the wise, in their sacrifices, their exertions, their trials, and their triumphs; to explore the arcana of the universe—evolve its sublime and yet simple laws—compass its immensity and analyze its elementary particles of matter; to enjoy the ever present and delightful converse of those sages of thought and prophets of humanity, to whom, from time to time, in the long lapse of ages, it has been given to be the interpreters and oracles of the race, the harbingers of its advancement and the historians of its progress. Nor is this prerogative longer restricted to a favored few, or peculiar to any rank or condition of life. It exists alike in the palace and the cottage; and like the free sun and air is accessible to all degrees and all stations wherever

the light of civilization is diffused. But although its judicious exercise is indispensable to an enlightened and comprehensive cultivation of the mind, there are a variety of considerations by which the acquisition of knowledge, either for its own sake, or in view of its immediate or contingent advantages is to be restrained, modified and directed. While the intellect should early be trained to a proper appreciation of its powers, and to a readiness, facility and skill in their use, adequate to all the vicissitudes of life, its energies should not be permitted to waste their freshness and vigor in the unbounded domains of the imagination—in unprofitable searches for those recondite treasures of knowledge, inapplicable to the practical purposes or pursuits of life, or in vague and aimless wanderings over those inviting fields of literary verdure which stretch out in boundless perspective wherever the fertile seeds of Genius have been scattered, or its exuberant fruits have been matured. 'Utility' should be inscribed upon the portals of the lofty temple of Intellectual Culture; and an intelligent design, and a constant and pervading reference to the elaboration and growth of character should ever be kept in view. The attainment of valuable and substantial knowledge must be effected, not by a passive reception of the ideas and sentiments of others, but by mastering not only the results of thorough exploration in the regions of literature and science, but the means by which those results were accomplished, and the principles from whence they were deduced. We may, indeed, and must, avail ourselves of the observation and experience of those who have preceded us in the various regions of inquiry; but to do so effectually, wisely and well, we must render their knowledge and experience our own, by analyzing the process by which it was derived, and subjecting its results to the crucible of our

own mental organization. The rapid and unprecedented accumulation of publications which distinguishes the present day, embracing every subject of thought, inquiry and imagination, increases in a very great degree the danger to be apprehended from an indiscriminating and unappropriating intellectual culture, if culture it may be called. The rich fruits of knowledge will inevitably be prevented from the attainment of a seasonable maturity, by the unchecked prevalence of those noxious weeds with which their germs are encompassed. The native strength and fertility of the soil, may perhaps ultimately enable it to neutralize and overcome these formidable influences, and to yield an abundant and profitable harvest; but an important portion of its luxuriance will nevertheless have been expended in the nourishment of useless and hurtful tares.

8. The great and radical error of all our systems of intellectual culture, undoubtedly consists in the practical assumption, that the mere acquisition of knowledge is the grand panacea for all the evils of ignorance and error. A wall of separation has too often been built up between the intellect and the heart; and while the one has been consigned to the educator to be polished, refined and strengthened, the other has been left exposed to the chilling influences of the world, to assume whatever hue, circumstances and inclination may chance to give it. As life advances, this unnatural barrier is levelled by the storms of passion and the tempests of adverse fortune; and in the conflict which ensues, the victory is seldom long in suspense; and the blooming and graceful flowers of genius and fancy and taste are either crushed at once, or reserved to grace the triumphal car of the passions. All experience has demonstrated that the intellect is to a very great extent the minister of the heart; ready to act in

prompt subserviency to the dictates of the will, and the prevailing impulse of the affective emotions, from whatsoever motive these dictates and impulses may emanate. If 'from the heart proceed evil thoughts' and all the long array of vices and crimes which degrade and brutalize humanity, the resources of the intellect will be exhausted in devising the most efficient means for their consummation and for exemption from their consequences. If 'vaulting ambition,' blind to the desolating results of its reckless career—heedless of the misery which it inflicts and induces—and attentive only to the accomplishment of its far-reaching designs of personal aggrandizement and power, tramples alike upon conscience, religion, justice and mercy,—the intellectual powers explore their wide domain for materials wherewith to decorate the altar, and strengthen and perpetuate the dominion of this usurper of the moral empire of the soul. If avarice wields the truncheon of the heart, the knowledge acquired from the vast store-house of ancient lore and modern research, will be concentrated in the accumulation of congenial food for grasping selfishness and greedy appropriation. If demoniac revenge and vindictive cruelty predominate in the moral kingdom, intellect devises the opportunity and the means—removes every intervening obstacle—and directs the way to vengeance, oppression, terror and devastation. On the other hand, when benevolence, justice, mercy and truth sit enthroned in the heart—when the darker passions no longer venture to renew the conflict with the soul—when each appetite and propensity has attained the limits beyond which it is not permitted to pass—the intellectual powers shine forth with a hallowed and resplendent radiance, expanding the circle of those exalted virtues which form the congenial atmosphere of the higher nature.

9. The paramount importance, therefore, of a thorough and enlightened discipline of the moral nature, having for its object the entire subjugation of the passions and propensities, to the supremacy of the conscience, the reason and the unperverted judgment, cannot fail to be at once perceived and universally recognized and admitted. Were our being higher in degree only, but not differing in kind from that of the animal creation, its perfection might be sought and attained in the cultivation of the physical nature. Were our existence comprised within the brief limits assigned to humanity in the present world, we might, perhaps, find our highest wisdom in augmenting and mastering the treasures of knowledge transmitted to us from the successive generations which have peopled the earth, and might accomplish the ends of our being, by the perfection and skilful exercise of our intellectual powers. But conscious as we are of the possession of various faculties, in common with the numerous orders of organic existence below our species, we are equally conscious that we occupy a higher scale in the economy of being; that the material and physical structure of our bodies and the wonderful faculties of our mind, are adapted to and designed for the accomplishment of objects which are to survive the frail and perishable tenement in which and by means of which, they are now conducted and matured. While we recognize the perpetual presence of a principle implanted in our nature which prompts us to the acquisition of knowledge, and to those incessant combinations of intellectual perceptions which enable us to range uncontrolled over the illimitable universe, we, at the same time, find ourselves surrounded by interests and relations, responsibilities and dependences, involving the interest and the welfare of our fellow beings, which demand of us,

at every advancing step of our progress, the performance of active and passive duties, serious and dispassionate reflection, cautious discrimination, sound judgment, and prompt determination between conflicting motives. Intimations, too, of the future, strengthening and gathering force and consistency as we advance in the journey of life and approach the confines of eternity—dim conceptions of the solemn grandeur of that destiny which is so soon and so surely to open upon us, and of the vast capacities of that nature, whose imperfect rudiments we are now painfully struggling to evolve—proclaim the insufficiency of mere knowledge to fulfil the requisitions of humanity.

10. There are moments in the life of every man, whatever may be his intellectual, social or moral condition, when the great problem of Existence is deeply and seriously pondered. Whence are we? Of what are the wonderful and mysterious elements which constitute thought, reason, and understanding, composed? Why are we here, and for what purpose? and what is to be our destination when, with the countless myriads of intelligent beings who have preceded us, we pass that fearful barrier beyond which mortal vision has never penetrated? From whence proceed the moral and physical evils with which we are surrounded? and why are they permitted in a world, where but for their prevailing influences, the animate and inanimate creation conspire to realize the perfection of omnipotent benevolence and wisdom? Are these evils a necessary part of the great scheme of things—inseparable from our condition—beyond our control—incapable of any essential modification by any exertions of ours? or are they the natural and inevitable results of successive violations of the original and established laws of our being—the consequences of ignorance or guilt

on our part—and therefore susceptible of mitigation at least, if not of final and complete eradication? May we look forward to the ultimate realization, in the advancing progress of the race, of those bright visions of philanthropists which point to the perfection of man's physical, intellectual, and moral nature, and to his consequent enjoyment of the full measure of happiness of which that nature is suceptible?

11. It is undoubtedly for the attainment of these high ends that we are created—that thought and reason were conferred upon us—and that all the wonderful and complicated machinery of our physical nature was constructed in perfect harmony with those higher and nobler attributes which separate us from the animal creation. The solemn records of revelation combine with the irresistible promptings of nature with her thousand voices from without, and the assurances of the faithful monitor within, to fasten upon us the great truth, that here—be our earthly career longer or shorter—happy or miserable—whether we have known and performed our duty, or haply failed to perceive it and groped our devious way in ignorance and doubt and error—to how much soever we may have attained in intellectual or moral excellence—or how little progress we may have made in the knowledge of the elementary principles of our nature—our existence is yet in the first feeble stages of its infancy. Here and there, in the lapse of ages we are permitted to witness partial developements of the capacity of humanity, even here—of the sublimity and grandeur to which the moral and intellectual faculties may aspire. 'Like angel's visits, few and far between,' men have appeared, whose lives have signally and beautifully illustrated the purest and most exalted virtues in the midst of circumstances the most gloomy and discouraging. Upon each and every member of the human family is

conferred the same godlike nature; and however restricted may now be its field of action—however dim and feeble its manifestations under the inexplicable modifications of that organization which constitutes life—however perverted from its original destination by the variable and powerful pressure of external circumstances—we are not permitted to doubt that it will ultimately fulfil its destiny and assume its appropriate place in the great scheme of creative wisdom and benevolence.

12. To attain, then, to a true conception of 'our being's end and aim'—to reach that high eminence of mental culture from whence we can calmly survey the sinuosities of our past course, and confidently direct its future progress—we must primarily sound the depths of our moral nature. We must ascertain the comparative strength, resources and capabilities of each of those faculties, which separately and in every variety of combination are destined to exert a controlling influence upon our future character. We must fortify, reinforce and strengthen the citadels of the heart; disarm the passions of their power to injure; render them tributary to virtue, amenable to conscience, and subservient to the supremacy of enlightened reason; and establish upon the firm basis of revelation and truth, that empire of mind which the wildest storms of external fortune shall be unable to shake, or the most formidable combinations of adverse fate to overthrow or subdue. Without this, intellectual power is of no avail. It becomes a 'flaming sword turning every way,' but *not* 'to guard the tree of life.' Of itself, it constitutes not human excellence. It co-exists, as we have already seen, with qualities diametrically opposite in their nature; and sheds as clear a light upon the deadliest machinations of the depraved and guilty mind, as upon the loftiest aspirations of the wise and good. In connec-

tion with, and in subordination to the moral sentiments, it expands the mind, and gives depth and solidity to the character; while at the same time it induces humility in the contemplation of the restricted limits within which its highest exertions are circumscribed —the mere point, in the vast immensity of the universe, which it can hope to analyze or apprehend. But it is in this connection only, that it becomes a blessing. When its rays illume the dark recesses of guilt, it is only to shed a baleful glare. When it feeds the flame of passion, furnishes aliment to unchastened ambition, promotes the views of absorbing selfishness, pampers the appetite or exalts the pride of its possessor; when the book of knowledge is opened only to discover or invent more extensive and efficient means of strengthening the ascendency and securing the dominion of those animal propensities which have enslaved the higher nature; when the wonders of creation—the uniform adaptation of the most perfect means to the highest ends of wisdom, benevolence and goodness—the incessant developements of the vastness, the grandeur and sublimity of the physical and moral universe, excite no responsive thrill of admiration, gratitude and deep humility—lead to no high appreciation of the dignity and value of the soul—no lofty conception of the true destiny of humanity—the cultivation of the intellectual powers serves no higher purpose than that of decorating with gaudy pageantry the hollow sepulchre of the soul.

13. It is not from the amount, the extent, or the variety of our knowledge, that our position in the universe, our character, our capabilities of usefulness or of progress, or our future destiny is to be determined. It is the use we make of the talents which have been confided to our keeping—the purposes

they subserve—the spirit, the faith, the obedience with which they are husbanded—that constitute the test of merit, and afford the basis upon which a righteous judgment is to be pronounced upon the results of our existence; and in the retributions of eternity, conduct and motive are weighed in a balance, admitting of no preponderance in favor of the most ample intellectual acquirement, unaccompanied by any corresponding fruit in the character and the life. The principle cannot be too strongly inculcated or enforced that knowledge alone, however varied or extended—talent and genius, however brilliant—intellectual power, however vigorous, discriminating and acute—can never constitute that moral worth, that commanding elevation of character, that dignity of being, and those fair and beautiful proportions of mental structure, which make up the ideal of humanity, and give to our nature its intrinsic value and nobility. It is only when the supremacy of the moral nature is firmly established—when we have accustomed ourselves to refer every suggestion, every impulse, every desire and motive to the searching ordeal of that tribunal which the Creator has placed as his vice-gerent in the soul, that we may profitably explore the vast arcana of nature and of art, for those treasures of knowledge, which will then and then only unfold to our intellectual conception their true uses and ends. In the moral, as in the physical world, the most nutritious and invigorating substances are dependent for their efficacious and salutary results upon the healthy condition of the system which partakes of their qualities. That intellectual aliment which to the mind properly disciplined and matured for its reception becomes assimilated and incorporated with its essence, strengthening, invigorating and replenishing all its energies, to another,

languid perhaps and feeble from inaction, debilitated by indiscriminating indulgence, or excited to an unnatural tension by the unregulated and undue action of the passions, so far from communicating elasticity and health, increases existing disorder, introduces new sources of disease and fatally deranges the entire mental constitution. That which to the one is a 'savor of life unto life' not unfrequently proves to the other a 'savor of death unto death.'

14. True elevation and dignity of character are dependent, not upon intellectual supremacy, but upon moral worth. Those minds which have impressed their stamp upon after ages—the founders of systems—the pioneers of thought—the reformers of the world—have been distinguished for nothing so much as for the simplicity, purity, and 'daily beauty' of their lives. They have not indeed been exempted from fallibility, from error, or from the frailties and weaknesses incident to humanity in its best estate; but they have successfully struggled with and subdued those formidable tendencies to evil, which find so congenial an abode in the undisciplined mind; and truth and nature, to their comprehension, have been revealed through an atmosphere disencumbered from the heavy mists of passion and the grosser particles of vice and guilt. The progressive and harmonious developement of all the faculties of our nature—the adaptation of each to its peculiar and appropriate sphere of action and of duty—a thorough and equal cultivation of all—and the systematic and enlightened advancement of their combined influences to the great purposes of existence, here and hereafter; these are the true constituents of sound mental and moral discipline—the indispensable elements of that culture and charac-

ter which the exalted interests of humanity demand. The undue preponderance of any faculty or combination of faculties, whatever may be its legitimate capacities for usefulness, or the peculiar and appropriate sphere of action for which it may be designed, deranges and disturbs this essential harmony, and becomes productive of disorder and evil. None of the passions or propensities implanted in the constitution of our being are destitute of a sphere of action and of motive, within which their manifestation is not only innocent, but salutary and even indispensable; and many of the sentiments which we are most accustomed to reverence and admire, may, and by no means unfrequently do, act from the impulse of mere passion—the exuberance of irrepressible sympathy—from habit—from constitutional tendency —and from the operation of motives often as exceptionable as those which prompt to their opposite vices.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE NATURE AND MISSION OF GENIUS.

1. It has been observed that men, in all ages have essentially differed in the possession of general and particular talents, whether connected with the cultivation of science and the arts, or pertaining to that species of mental power which confers moral superiority and strength of character. These differences have obviously not been the result of mere volition, nor have they been capable of essential diminution, much less of eradication, by the utmost exertions of human means. Hence, doubtless, has originated the infinite variety of character and attainment which has always existed, and which is so universally apparent. In the ordinary intercourse of society, we experience no difficulty in detecting among the mass of men congregated in the great thoroughfares of civilization, the most palpable shades of intellectual and moral difference; while perhaps but very few rise to any remarkable extent above the ordinary level of the society of which they form a part. Occasionally, however, we meet with those, whose intellectual powers, wholly or in part, seem to expand without effort to the highest degree of advancement, and to embrace at once and intuitively the utmost extent of science and knowledge comprised within the range of the peculiar faculties thus vigorously manifested. These extraordinary developements of the mental functions however, rarely include the entire circle of the intellectual or moral attributes of our nature; and accordingly we almost

invariably find the highest efforts of genius concentrated upon some favorite department of exertion in which its energies are exhausted, while in all the other walks of science, mediocrity alone is apparent.

2. The manifestations of this superiority of endowment have, not unfrequently, been ascribed in a great degree to the presence and operation of adventitious causes; and regarded as the consequence rather of education, habit and discipline, joined to a favorable combination of external circumstances, than of any radical inequality of natural gifts. Notwithstanding the universal prevalence of the most opposite and distinctive peculiarities of character and attainment, the conclusion has been deduced that no fundamental diversity of faculties existed; that the inclination, the will and the necessary exertion were alone requisite, in the absence of any external obstacle, to place each intelligent individual of the species upon a footing of equality with those who have manifested the utmost compass of mental power. It has not been without a long and severe struggle that this flattering doctrine of the essential equality of the mental faculties, has at length been generally abandoned as utterly untenable by reason, and unfounded in nature. The irresistible mass of evidence establishing apparently beyond the possibility of cavil, a doctrine more in consonance with the experience and good sense of mankind, has, it is true, been ingeniously sought to be parried by urging the known and powerful influence of climate, education, habit and circumstances, over the formation and developement of character. A thorough investigation, however, of the elementary principles of mental philosophy has abundantly demonstrated that much as these and similar influences may modify, they can neither create, nor materially control, the predominant faculties of our nature.

3. If the proposition be true that we can infer the existence, extent and variety of the mental faculties, only from their different manifestations, the conclusion is irresistible that intellectual and moral powers have been unequally bestowed upon the human family, and that Genius owes its triumphs to a source essentially independent as well of any external combination of circumstances, as of extraordinary mental application, habit or discipline. In the idiot no external indications of the presence and operation of intellectual or moral faculties are discernible, and we therefore invariably and justly infer their non-existence in the constitution of his being, or at least, (and for the purposes of our argument, the effect is precisely the same,) the non-existence or complete derangement of the physical organs by means of which alone they can, in this world, be manifested. In the natives of New Holland, portions of Africa and Asia, and some of the islands of the Pacific, the manifestations of these faculties are feeble and inefficient, barely sufficing for the lowest condition of human existence; and we accordingly assign to these unfortunate and degraded beings, a corresponding deficiency in mental and moral organization. On the other hand, in the civilized nations of the globe, the arts and sciences are cultivated, the imagination expands, the moral affections are constantly called into active exercise, civil and religious institutions are established and maintained, and the vast machinery of society harmoniously revolves, dispensing its innumerable blessings, and carrying forward, with gigantic strides, the destinies of the race; and here we reach the highest developement, and infer the presence of the most exalted intellectual and moral capacities. But here too, we are called upon to distinguish the greatest variety of developement, among the individuals who compose these various

communities, from the wretched outcasts who linger on the confines of barbarism, the incurably vicious, or hopelessly imbecile, up to the Bacons, the Napoleons, and the Franklins, who occupy the highest niches in the temple of fame.

4. This variety will be found to exist, so far as we are able to discover, wholly irrespective and independent of external circumstances, of education, of rank or station, of the determination of the will, or in short, of any artificial or extraneous appliances, physical or moral. In numerous well authenticated instances, the peculiar direction and extraordinary energy of the mental faculties, do not even await the period ordinarily assigned to their earliest developement. Handel, Haydn, and Mozart conceived and executed the most difficult and complicated pieces of music before the age of twelve years. Raphael, at the same immature period, had exhibited the most decided and unequivocal proofs of the splendid talents as an artist for which he afterwards became so celebrated; and our own eminent painter West, equally early displayed a power of conception, and a facility and happiness of execution, surpassing, in his own mature judgment, any of his subsequent attainments. Pascal, without even the aid of an instructor, had before the age of sixteen mastered the elements of Euclid, and written a treatise on conic sections; and the peculiar genius of Canova was developed at a still earlier period. Milton, Pope and Cowley, to use the language of Dr. Johnson, 'gave such early proofs not only of powers of language but of comprehension of things as to more tardy minds seems scarcely credible.' Metastasio, in early childhood, amused himself with extemporary poetical composition; and the extraordinary powers of mind of Danté prematurely wasted his physical energies, and subjected his too susceptible temperament to

constant suffering. The records of history and biography and the biographies of distinguished individuals in the various walks of literature and science, present numerous similar illustrations of the strongly marked precocity of Genius; and our own observation, not unfrequently enables us to verify their fidelity and to recognize their conformity to nature. The almost supernatural mathematical powers of Zerah Colburn, at the age of five years, and the thrilling bursts of poetry which spontaneously flowed from the pens of Lucretia Maria Davison and her no less gifted and unfortunate sister, are striking instances of mental endowments, closely bordering upon instinctive powers.

5. There have been men too in every age, who, in the fulfilment of the mission confided to them by Genius, have surmounted the most discouraging obstacles of adverse fortune; who, in spite of difficulties, which to ordinary minds would have proved utterly disheartening, have risen to eminence; who, unaided and alone, have sought out the fountains of knowledge and the repositories of science; and who, sustained by their intrinsic greatness of soul have waged a triumphant warfare with the powerful adverse influences which opposed their progress. Millions of the human race since the world began have, in their generation, enjoyed the advantages of wealth, of station, and of leisure. The various paths of science and wisdom to such have been invitingly thrown open, and strewed with flowers; and yet they have left no abiding memorial of their existence —bequeathed to the world no rich inheritance of thought—transmitted to posterity no legacy of undying fame. They doubtless fulfilled, more or less worthily, more or less faithfully, their part in the great drama of existence; they toiled, they suffered;

by turns they became the victims of the craft, the power, the oppression of their fellows, and of the still more unrelenting domination of their own passions and propensities; and 'life's fitful fever o'er, they sleep well.' But neither physical obstacles nor unpropitious circumstances—neither depressing poverty nor perverse opposition—neither 'principalities nor powers' have been able to arrest the progress or stay the resistless career of Genius, in its ascent to greatness and to fame. It matters not whether the future hero, philosopher, poet, artist, or statesman, be born and nourished in the pavilions of princes, or the obscure recesses of a lonely garret—whether the bright sun of prosperity illumine his opening fortunes, or the thickest clouds of adversity encompass the horizon of his hopes; his irrepressible energies burst asunder with equal ease and certainty the silken bonds of effeminacy, and the iron chains of adverse fate. Surrounded by the most unpropitious circumstances, and without the aid of fortune, friends or adventitious influence, Shakspeare poured forth the masterly effusions of his varied and profound intellect. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' was produced under the pressure of the deepest worldly gloom, and amid circumstances of the most trying and painful nature. Poverty, destitution and hardships cradled the genius of Burns, and cares and sorrows, vexations and disappointments, penury and remorse pursued him to the tomb. The melting and soul-subduing pathos of Tasso emanated from the unbroken solitude of his dungeon. Columbus painfully advanced to the great task of a world's discovery, through long years of privation, despondency and discouragement. The splendid discoveries of Kepler were promulgated in the midst of the most harassing penury and destitution. Heyne's meridian of life had been overpassed before one solitary gleam of prosperous fortune relieved the heavy

gloom which had brooded over its morning-sky; and Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa sustained an incessant and unequal conflict with hardships and difficulties innumerable and trying. On the other hand, the muse of Byron would not have soared to a less lofty height, nor the intellectual powers of Newton, Bacon or Boyle, have been circumscribed within narrower bounds, had their lines fallen in less pleasant places. Are we not warranted, therefore, in the assertion that the influence which external circumstances exert over the destiny of Genius, is inconsiderable and unimportant?

6. The peculiar direction which extraordinary intellectual endowments assume in their developement, is not unfrequently, perhaps uniformly, dependent upon the predominating influence of the moral qualities of the mind. If the higher and nobler sentiments habitually prevail, the tendency of the intellectual faculties will lead to the recognition and promotion of pursuits allied to benevolence, justice and philanthropy; while, on the other hand, if these noble sentiments are practically subordinated to the control of the passions, the talents bestowed will be perverted, and the most brilliant capacity serve only the ignoble purpose of ministering to the most depraved vices of humanity. The history of the world is full of illustrations in support of this proposition. How often are we called upon to lament the infatuation with which mental powers of the highest order have been perversely prostituted to the worst and most degrading purposes; while, on the contrary, with what lively satisfaction do we trace the elevated and noble career of the Franklins, the Howards, the Fenelons, the Oberlins of the race! Compare the baleful influence and desolating effects of the unrivalled genius of Napoleon, with the expanded patriotism —the purity of life and of purpose which so eminent-

ly characterized our own Washington! Contrast the demoralizing tendency of Byron's fitful, morbid and impassioned muse, dazzling as may be its splendor of diction and of thought, with the religious cheerfulness, the philosophic serenity, the calm beauty of Wordsworth, or of Bryant.

7. The various peculiarities of mental and moral character which in every age have made up the aggregate of human life—which are often as distinct, palpable and strongly marked in individuals residing in the same community, moving in the same sphere of life, and even composing the same family, as in those separated by continents and oceans, or occupying the most dissimilar stations—are utterly inconsistent with the hypothesis of an original equality of endowments. The very admiration which we are accustomed to lavish upon the productions of Genius —the rich incense of praise which uniformly ascends to the memory of those who have distinguished themselves in the exhibition of intellectual or moral supremacy—afford the most conclusive evidence that mankind have universally regarded such exhibitions as within the mental compass of the favored few alone. Who would not, if he could, sound with Shakspeare each harmonious or discordant note, of passion or of feeling in the world of the imagination, until its vibrations found an echo in every human bosom? or soar, with Milton, on the strong wings of thought to the highest realms of the upper air? or sanctify, with Wordsworth, each passing scene of life by infusing into its associations the 'still sad music of humanity?' Who would not delight to trace, with Newton, the vast machinery of the universe? with Franklin, to disarm the elements? or with Fulton and Watt and Arkwright, to confer new sources of power upon the physical energies of the race? Or who would not, if conscious of the ability, transfer to

the canvas, the sublime and beautiful conceptions of a Raphael, a Titian, or a Guido? or emulate those surpassing combinations of melody and harmony, which the great Italian masters alone have been able to produce? Who does not admire the splendid manifestations of genius? who does not delight to inhale its ethereal essence—to appropriate its rich treasures of thought and design—to appreciate its intrinsic greatness, and to perpetuate and consecrate its triumphs? Who does not, in the language of an eloquent writer, 'delight to watch, fold by fold, the buckling on of the celestial panoply, and to witness the leading forth of that chariot, which, borne on irresistible wheels, and drawn by steeds of immortal race, is destined to crush the necks of the mighty, and sweep away the serried strength of armies!' But to ascend those lofty heights of intellectual and moral power, from whence we may look abroad upon the vast domain of nature and penetrate its most secret recesses, is given only to the master spirits of the race. It is nature's best and highest gift; and when withheld is unattainable by human means. Its recipient is impelled by an irresistible mental and moral force to fulfil his high destiny; and although he may miserably pervert the faculties bestowed upon him, he cannot repress their powerful developement. Whether they shall be exercised for good or for evil, may greatly depend upon the external influences by which he is surrounded—upon the favorable or unfavorable combinations of the mental constitution—upon education, habit or impulse; but in whatever field of action their energies may be put forth, their commanding influence will be recognized.

8. That seems therefore to be the true philosophy of the human mind in this respect, which teaches, as the invariable result of a faithful observation of na-

ture, that the various intellectual and moral faculties are possessed in different degrees by different individuals; that this diversity of endowment is original and innate; that although it is susceptible to a greater or less extent of modification by circumstances, education and habit, it is neither created nor can it be materially affected by either or by any of these causes; and that the phenomena of Genius are the results of a high degree of manifestation of the mental faculties, or of some one or more of them. It follows, from this view of the subject, that no individual has it in his power, by the utmost efforts of thought, application or discipline, so to add to his intellectual or moral stature as to compass the attainment of powers not originally bestowed upon him. He may indeed, and should, develope to their utmost capacity those faculties which God and nature have conferred; he may enlarge and expand his intellectual vision, and establish on a more firm basis, the supremacy of his moral and religious nature; but history, observation and experience, have abundantly demonstrated, that each individual finds a limit which he may not overpass, whatever may be the relation which that limit holds to the talents, capacities and acquirements of others. Vast and comprehensive as were the acknowledged powers of Shakspeare in the analysis and interpretation of universal humanity, those great discoveries which were accomplished by Newton, Galileo, Franklin and Kepler,—and those constructive and inventive talents which formed the intellectual strength of Arkwright, Watt and Fulton, were beyond the pale even of his splendid genius. Nor could Raphael, though possessing a rare and felicitous combination of mental faculties, have invented the telescope, nor Davy have ornamented the chambers of the Vatican with the magnificent creations of beauty. Upon each and every individual

the Creator has bestowed those capacities and talents best adapted, in the view of Omnipotent Wisdom, to his peculiar condition ; and while to some a greater, and to others a less endowment has been granted, each is responsible for the due cultivation and faithful application of the powers conferred.

9. This arrangement of the moral world, when rightly viewed, is abundantly indicative of the wisdom and benevolence of its Author, and will be found admirably in harmony with all our limited faculties are able to conceive of the great scheme of Creation and Providence. An infinite but systematic diversity of condition and attributes, pervades the whole of animate and inanimate nature ; and the history of the world, and the discoveries of science, alike develope a constant and progressive capacity of improvement in the intellectual and moral nature of man. In the infancy of his being, his mental powers were necessarily restricted within a very narrow compass ; but, as century after century rolls on, we find a slow but certain progress manifesting itself not only in an increased, more accurate and extensive knowledge of the physical world, but in a higher appreciation and wiser cultivation of the distinctive faculties of humanity. For this purpose we are indebted, not so much to the simultaneous advance and self-enlightenment of the race, as to the predominating influence of the few who from time to time have stood forward, as the guides, the teachers, the educators of their fellow men ; to those who, rising above the prevailing standard of knowledge, have sought out and announced some hitherto undiscovered fundamental principle, upon which mankind, sooner or later, have taken their stand, and from thence proceeded to higher attainments, and entered a more expanded field of progress. With rare exceptions, the triumphs of Genius have heralded the advancement of

the race. Its manifestations have opened up the paths of improvement in all that is valuable in knowledge, conducive to civilization, elevating in morality, and ennobling in humanity. Its votaries have been emphatically the pioneers of mind, the harbingers of truth, the interpreters of Nature in her manifold voices of wisdom and instruction, and the instruments in the hands of the Creator for the gradual unfolding of those great principles upon which the present and future destiny of the race depend. As such, we may well regard them as the benefactors of humanity, cherish their memory, and consecrate their achievements. But this fitting sentiment of veneration may be tempered by the reflection that the mission of Genius is special; that its superiority, in one respect, is often counterbalanced by a corresponding inferiority in others, of equal and perhaps of superior general importance; that it is not unfrequently the source of misery and unhappiness to its possessor; and that it is almost universally distinguished by the absence of that harmonious symmetry and graceful proportion of character which constitutes the secret of well-being and the true charm of life.

10. Each faculty of the human mind may find its appropriate aliment in the physical and moral world; and it is unquestionably within the compass of every intelligent being, however unfavorably situated with reference to extrinsic circumstances, to accomplish a vast amount of individual, social, and general good; to render even the calamities of life subservient to moral and intellectual advancement; to adorn our common nature, within the sphere, however circumscribed, which Providence has assigned as the theatre of his exertion and influence; to add somewhat, at least, to the stock of human enjoyment, if he cannot contribute to that of knowledge and wisdom; and daily to obtain a clearer insight into the mysteries

by which he is surrounded, and of which his own existence constitutes so important a part. The enlightenment of our minds; the cultivation and discipline of our whole nature; the subjugation of our passions and propensities to the control of reason and of conscience; the faithful discharge of all the duties incumbent upon us as reflecting, intelligent, and accountable beings;—these will constitute and secure our highest happiness; and that life can never be deemed barren or useless, nor that condition unfavorable, in which we are enabled, by an unwavering conformity to the impulses of our better nature, aided by the pure precepts of Christianity, to accomplish the great purposes of existence.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MENTAL PHILOSOPHY.

1. THAT is the only true philosophy of human life which, by means of an enlightened knowledge and a just appreciation of all our powers and faculties, physical, intellectual, and moral, enables us to conform, in all things, to the laws and constitution of our being. That a system of ethical and practical morality so consonant to our highest interest has not hitherto generally prevailed, is painfully obvious when we reflect upon the capacity of our common nature for the enjoyment of happiness,—a capacity conferred upon it by infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power,—and consider the vast amount of evil and of suffering, mental and physical, which surrounds us on every hand. It requires but an ordinary exertion of reason to be assured that these are not the legitimate or the necessary results of that wonderful organization which constitutes human life. On the contrary, we not only see the most abundant evidences of an opposite design and adaptation pervading our entire corporeal structure, but we perceive the invariable tendency of external nature to minister to our pleasure and benefit; and we recognize the hand of a bounteous Benefactor in the innumerable blessings which are spread out for our acceptance in the variegated domain of nature and of providence. It is, however, lamentably true, that man "has corrupted his way upon the earth;" that, overstepping the boundaries prescribed by the Creator, and within which the high and holy purposes of existence might efficiently and harmo-

niously have been accomplished, he "has sought out many inventions," and mingled the cup of his destiny with discordant and bitter ingredients. A systematic obedience to the natural and moral laws impressed by the Creator upon all the workmanship of his hands, must necessarily and invariably be productive of the highest degree of happiness—must secure an exemption from those numerous and distressing physical ills which now so mournfully weigh down the energies of humanity, and substitute a cheerful and abiding enjoyment of all the innumerable blessings of life.

2. While it may safely be presumed that all men desire thus to fulfil the great purposes of existence, the melancholy experience of the world abundantly demonstrates that few have been able to comprehend, and still fewer to apply the means of accomplishing, this universal object of human exertion. Originally constituted with powers and faculties in harmony with each other, and with the external world, the legitimate exercise of these various powers and faculties was alone necessary to a full participation in the utmost measure of happiness of which humanity admitted. The lower orders of animated creation were endowed with constitutions adapted to their rank in the scale of being, and with faculties, powers, and sources of enjoyment, fitted to their several natures. The exercise of these faculties, however, was, in their case, as we have before had occasion to observe, restrained within certain definite and impassable limits; with them the objects and purposes of existence are instinctively fulfilled; and for them, by the very constitution of their nature, transgression is rendered impossible. Upon man were conferred intellectual and moral powers, comprising within themselves every element of progressive improvement, of refined enjoyment, and substantial happiness; together with the

ability to exercise these powers wisely and judiciously, and to reap the rich fruits of an enlightened obedience to the laws of the Creator, or to pervert and misapply them, with all the certain and fearful responsibilities attached to a departure from the established conditions of physical and moral well-being.

3. The absolute dependence of happiness upon obedience can be adequately and fully realized only by the painful experience resulting from an infringement of the Creator's laws. The relation thus established, it may well be conceived, would, at an early period of man's existence, be impressed upon his mind with a force and a distinctness proportioned to its importance; so that, when pain and misery, remorse or degradation, were experienced, there should be neither difficulty nor hesitation in tracing these desolating influences to their legitimate source — the violation of some organic, mental, or moral law. In proportion, however, as physical and moral evil extended its sway, widened and deepened its channels, and became diffused over the surface of society, — as occasional violations of the laws of being gradually, and by degrees, ripened into confirmed habits, and the distinctions between a strict obedience to the requisitions of the Creator and the variable standards set up by individuals or communities became confused or obliterated,—the intellectual and moral powers would, it is obvious, refer with constantly increasing difficulty to the sources of the internal and external conflict which would be experienced. The eternal and invariable relation between virtue and happiness, and vice and misery, in all their forms, and under every combination of circumstances, would cease to be clearly apprehended, and man would grope his way, amid the manifold intricacies of life, in darkness, obscurity, and ignorance. By insensible degrees, fatal infringements of the laws of being would be regarded as

innocent, or, at least, as pardonable indulgences, and their consequences ranked among the inevitable tendencies of constitutional organization, or the unavoidable evils of humanity. Bad passions, long unchecked, would obtain an uncontrollable ascendency over the moral nature; and the virtuous principles, originally implanted, become incapable, from inaction, of exerting their high functions. Thus the entire harmony and beauty of the moral system would speedily and effectually become deranged and defaced, and the bitter penalty induced by a disregard of the fundamental laws so general and extensive would continually be reproduced and transmitted from one generation to another, heightened and inflamed by its reaction upon individuals and communities, and by a perverted and depraved public sentiment pervading, to a greater or less extent, all classes and conditions of men.

4. The operation of this downward tendency in the mental and moral process which we have described, may be distinctly traced, as we follow the recorded history of the race from its primeval condition of innocence and purity to the present period. Where, in her weary flight over the vast expanse of the past, shall the emblem and messenger of peace and innocence find a verdant spot upon which to fold her wings and repose in undisturbed security! The career of the princes, potentates, and rulers of the earth, has, with frightful uniformity, been marked by blood, and carnage, and desolation. Nations and kingdoms, empires and people, have fulfilled their troubled course—tasted for a brief period the cup of apparent prosperity, and drained that of retribution to its very dregs. With the history of the great mass of individuals composing these communities we are ignorant, except so far as its tenor may be legitimately inferred from the character and results of their

public institutions, their heroes and rulers, or from the deplorable ignorance, unrestrained wickedness, and lawless pollution, manifest upon every page of their annals. At occasional intervals,—intervals composing the established epochs of history,—the smouldering fires of man's wickedness and depravity, no longer capable of finding aliment beneath the surface of society upon which to exhaust their fury, have burst upon the astonished nations in all their aggravated intensity, spreading far and wide a fearful retribution. Moral eruptions like these impress upon us the conviction that, while a deep and palpable darkness had long brooded over the moral and intellectual powers, and while the lights of reason and revelation had ceased to shed even a temporary and fitful glow upon the rankling and festering corruptions of society in all its great departments, nothing less than a violent and desolating explosion of the angry elements, thus preying upon each other, and undermining the social and moral fabric, could vindicate the eternal claims of justice and the fundamental laws of being. Good and great men, it is true, occasionally appeared, and maintained long and earnest struggles to recall and reëstablish the long-forgotten landmarks of truth and nature. But their struggles were unavailing. Theirs were bright lights, shining with a vivid brilliancy amid the surrounding darkness; and the mental eye still reposes with pleasure upon their time-hallowed lustre. To the age for which they beamed, however, their rays served only to reflect the unwelcome images of a mental and moral excellence beyond its reach, and surpassing even its comprehension. Doubtless, too, the quiet waters of oblivion have closed over the lives of many who attained, in their generation, to the knowledge and appreciation of truth, who discovered and obeyed the laws of their being, and reaped the rich rewards of

virtue and innocence. But the knowledge which the few thus sought out and appropriated was unavailingly offered to the acceptance of the many. The world had become a vast theatre, where riches, glory, and power, were the splendid prizes awarded to the successful competitors for its favors. The virtues, the graces, and ornaments, of public and private life were disregarded, uncultivated, and unsought. The laurel encircled the brow, and the triumphal pageant cheered the heart, of those alone who were most conspicuous in the bloody career of martial glory. Honor and fame, and the applause of the multitude, waited upon wealth, however attained; the regards of the present, and the admiration and wonder of succeeding ages, were promised to the bold and successful soldier of fortune, however recklessly he had trampled upon every nobler feeling of the heart, and however heartlessly he had crushed every opening and blooming flower of existence. What wonder, then, that the peaceful shrines of innocence, and purity, and peace, were deserted and abandoned? that the admonitions of wisdom, with its "still, small voice," were unheard or unregarded? that the temples of the God of nature and of providence were converted into shameless marts of hypocrisy and traffic, and desecrated by open crime and systematic pollution? What wonder that, instead of the "peaceful fruits of righteousness," carnage and desolation reigned predominant; lawless violence, in all its frightful forms, abounded and multiplied; injustice and oppression stalked abroad, unrestrained by conscience or the arm of the civil magistrate; and "men's hearts" every where "failed them for fear"?

5. But, leaving the past, let us briefly advert to the present; and if, from a survey of all its aspects, we may rationally look forward to the future for a rapid and steady advance in that practical wisdom which

shall make mankind better and happier, the philanthropist and the Christian may still find abundant cause to rejoice in the dawn of a brighter dispensation.

6. The aspects in which the present, with reference to the past and the future, may be viewed, are manifold and various. Civilization has greatly extended its boundaries, and elevated and expanded its character. The civilization of the present day, in kind as well as in degree, far surpasses that which we are accustomed still to term the civilization of Greece and Rome, and of the middle ages. Not only have the arts and sciences attained to a higher standard of excellence, and been much more widely and extensively diffused, but a nicer perception and a finer appreciation of humanity, as such, have been superinduced. Mankind are more disposed to regard each other as equal in rights, in origin, and in destination; as brethren of one common family, journeying together, for a brief period, upon the same great thoroughfare of life, pursuing essentially the same objects by an infinite variety of means, liable to the same frailties and errors, and entitled, each from the other, to mutual forbearance, mutual sympathy, and kind offices. The gentle influences of the Christian religion have refined and softened the hearts of men, diffusing the kindly spirit of charity, of toleration, and of a comprehensive benevolence. The thrones of tyrants and the high places of the oppressor have been shaken to their foundations by the powerful upheaving and the irrepressible energies of the masses, conscious of their accumulated wrongs and their innate strength, and borne onward, by the mighty impulse of an aroused and enlightened public sentiment, to the practical assertion of their rights,—not by violence, not through the tempestuous and chaotic whirlwind of civil commotion, created and sustained by brute, sanguinary, undiscerning force,—but,

by a moral strength and determination, accomplishing its high purpose by the *fiat* of its own indomitable will. The forms and institutions of the olden time indeed survive; but they are forms and institutions only. Their spirit has forever departed. Like the crumbling monuments of Memphis, Thebes, and the Eternal City, they will be left to the corroding action of time, and become the objects of respectful curiosity to future ages, as the venerable relics of an imperfect civilization, which, having accomplished its mission in the discipline of humanity, was succeeded by a new order of things.

7. The boundaries of the empire of thought, of reason, and of reflection, have, also, perceptibly been enlarged. Men, and classes of men, heretofore unaccustomed to an analytical investigation of even the most ordinary phenomena of human life, are beginning to weigh and to compare opinions on the most important topics, to discuss and to controvert grave principles heretofore acquiesced in blindly on the authority of names, or at the suggestion of an unreasoning and absurd prejudice. Symptoms are abroad which render the inference by no means irrational, that the present century at least, if not the existing generation, will witness the peaceable demolition of many of those arbitrary barriers to advancement and improvement which owe their origin to a state of things which has long ceased to exist—to institutions no longer recognized by the civilization of modern times, and to an era of intellectual and moral progress far behind the prevailing standard. To what purpose is this rushing together of the elements of mental and moral strength from the various regions to which modern civilization has extended—all tending, through an infinite combination of channels, to one great end—all seeking to unravel the tangled web

of human destiny, to penetrate the labyrinths of existence, to reveal the deeply-buried, long-concealed treasures there deposited? What mean the anxious expectations with which the great heart of humanity, in all its mighty pulsations, is tremblingly alive, and beats in concert, presaging the advent of some organic change in the moral world—a change to be wrought by the weapons of enlightened reason, guided by pure and undefiled religion, and sanctified by truth and nature? Do they not indicate an ultimate combination, strength, and direction, before which error, in all its manifold forms, will be expelled from its last stronghold, and the true dignity, power, and destiny of man be asserted and maintained?

8. Our earthly existence has been termed a probationary state; and this is unquestionably true with reference not merely to our individual experience, hopes, and destiny, but to that of the race. Endowed with an immortal nature, gifted with faculties and powers which enable us to attain the highest happiness and virtue, and favored with a clear revelation of the path of duty, and with the capacity to acquire a full knowledge of good and evil, and to appreciate the responsibility involved in their choice,—we have yet been left free so to combine and mould the complicated elements of our being as to form our own distinctive character, work out our own enjoyment, and shape our own destiny. As, in the progress of individual existence, it requires long years of bitter experience, deep and varied reflection, and a constant study of human nature in all its aspects, to enable us to approximate to a correct estimate of our own powers, duties, and interest, so, in reference to the race, centuries may pass before the true philosophy of human life may be evolved from the discordant elements of human experience, study, and reflection. We may be permitted to indulge the hope, that the

time is not far distant when the great mass of mankind shall, at least, have learned the lesson which it will have cost so many ages of violence and bloodshed to acquire,—that the collisions of the passions and propensities can never advance the interests nor promote the welfare of the race. It is impossible to estimate how many centuries of civilization have been postponed to the miserable ambition for power, for dominion, and a false greatness. The almost inconceivable advance which less than half a century of comparative exemption from the turmoil of physical contest has witnessed, may, perhaps, afford us a feeble conception of the mental and moral elevation to which we might have attained, had this great lesson been earlier learnt. But, notwithstanding the prevalence of physical violence and mental gloom, the lights of science and civilization have cheered and illumined the nations of the earth. Within the compass of less than four centuries, the progress of knowledge, in all that relates to the material universe, has enabled us to ascertain, with precision and certainty, the laws by which the planetary orbs are governed, the various elements and properties of matter in all its forms, the complicated phenomena of the animal and vegetable creation, the structure and composition of the earth's surface, the causes and the limitations of elemental strife, and the multifarious manifestations of animal and physical organization. The great principle has been established that all the workmanship of the Creator displayed to human view is subjected to certain and invariable laws; that these laws are susceptible of discovery and comprehension; and that, by their constant and pervading operation, all the phenomena of the visible creation are sustained, and the vast machinery of the universe harmoniously directed.

9. These great results of knowledge and science

having thus been brought within the comprehension of all who desire to look into the instructive book of external nature, the interesting inquiry is now widely beginning to be agitated, What are the laws by which the mind itself exists, and by what means, and under what conditions, and subject to what influences, does it manifest its myriad combinations of powers, faculties, sentiments, propensities, and emotions? If to all the other emanations of creative wisdom and goodness fixed laws have been prescribed, and these laws and their operations brought within the compass of the human intellect, and rendered capable of being applied to the various purposes of science and art, is not the inference irresistible that to our immortal and spiritual nature laws equally certain and invariable have been prescribed, the knowledge of which is equally attainable, and of far greater importance to our present and future welfare? Metaphysicians, from the days of Aristotle to the present day, have earnestly sought to solve this great problem; but, with rare exceptions, they have failed, until within comparatively a recent period, to throw around this deeply interesting and important subject the full and clear light of demonstration, or to carry conviction to the minds of men. They have too often cut the Gordian knot, without endeavoring patiently and perseveringly to unfold its complicated mazes. They have addressed themselves rather to the intellects of the cultivated few, than to the hearts of the mass of the human family, equally interested with the wisest of the race in the practical solution of this momentous question. They have succeeded in erecting a great variety of admirable superstructures, each tinged with the peculiar mental and moral colors of its architect, each faithfully representing the consciousness and the attainments of the individual mind from which it emanated, but possessing few of those enduring

elements of universal truth and nature capable of instant recognition and immediate approbation by every grade of intellect and every variety of moral advancement. One system has rapidly succeeded another; and this, in its turn, has given place to a more ingenious and plausible hypothesis; all equally artificial and unsatisfactory. The minds of earnest inquirers were unsettled and unconvinced; the human intellect roamed over the broad fields of imagination without a guide, building up for itself misty, vague, and unsubstantial theories; and at a period when a rational, simple, and harmonious system was universally demanded,—a system based upon the immovable foundations of nature, and adapted to all the capacities, wants, and aspirations, of humanity,—the metaphysics of the schools furnished nothing beyond the most abstract conceptions of isolated intellect, captivating, indeed, and beautiful to the fancy, but cheerless and uninviting to the heart.

10. Undeniably, this failure to apprehend the true philosophy of the human mind was mainly owing to the absence of a practical and systematic arrangement of the ample materials for observation and analysis which were within the reach and at the command of the inquirer. That man possessed a reasoning and discriminating mind, with which the lower classes of organized beings were not endowed, was a self-evident proposition. That this mind was intimately connected with the body, and that it could manifest itself only through that physical organization which constituted life, was equally evident; and yet, in all its essential and distinctive attributes, it appeared to be superior to and independent of its material adjunct, in effect controlling all those movements, and directing and presiding over all those acts of the latter, which involved any degree of moral responsibility, and manifesting, from time to time, the most

Confining his researches and inductions strictly within the pale of accurate observation and experience, and aided by the superior intellectual acumen and scientific skill of a kindred mind, the details of a system were gradually and cautiously evolved, which challenged the most scrutinizing investigation, and addressed itself directly and powerfully to the most enlightened sanctions of the intellect, and the best and holiest sympathies of the heart. This system assumes for its basis the undeniable connection and mutual dependence of the mind and body, during our earthly existence, and the fact that the former, whatever may be its essence, uniformly manifests itself, in this state of being, through the agency of the latter. By a series of analytical experiments, founded upon a close and patient investigation of facts, it was ascertained and demonstrated beyond the possibility of cavil, that the brain, the acknowledged seat of the mind, consists of a series of organs, each of which is charged with the manifestation of a distinct faculty of the mind; that the relative location of these organs, and the mental functions which they perform, are susceptible of discovery; and that upon the predominance of the particular faculties, sentiments, or propensities, which are manifested through these organs, or the various combinations of them which distinguish the various conformations of mind, is founded the infinite diversity of character, conduct, and attainment, which pervades humanity. These faculties, sentiments, and propensities were classified, as well with reference to their functions in the development and manifestation of the animal, the intellectual, and the moral nature of man, as to their respective agency in the production of the various passions, emotions, and conceptions, which prevail to a greater or less extent in the composition of every intelligent being.

12. Innumerable observations, extending through a

period of more than half a century, and embracing every variety of character and of detail, have placed this great system of mental and moral philosophy upon the soundest and most irrefragable basis. The circle of its influence is steadily and rapidly expanding through every class of society, reaching every grade of mind, fertilizing the vast soil of humanity in all its departments, and preparing a rich and abundant harvest of practical usefulness. Its interesting and sublime revelations bear no affinity to those mysterious and incomprehensible abstractions which have so long usurped the high places of metaphysical lore. They come to us speaking the language of truth and nature, in a voice by which all who have "ears to hear," and hearts to feel, may profit; which penetrates to the innermost sanctuary of individual consciousness, and wakens the slumbering echoes of humanity. Those who occupied the chief seats in the numerous temples of the ancient philosophy, while they have instinctively denounced and proscribed these new and strange doctrines, have seen, with increasing alarm, their steady advance and rapidly extending influence. Their "ineffectual fires" have paled and grown dim before the brightening light and kindling warmth of the rising orb. The human mind is no longer symbolized to the imagination as a heterogeneous and inexplicable compound of ethereal influences and "baser matter," impelling to opposite and discordant results. The "middle wall of partition," which for ages had separated the constituent elements of our common humanity, has been broken down; and man stands forth in the image of his Creator, "a living soul," occupying and consecrating by its deathless energies an organized corporeal structure, a "temple not made with hands," with powers and faculties, propensities and sentiments, each performing its own peculiar and appropriate

functions within the prescribed range of its operations, fulfilling harmoniously its separate mission, and all effectually and admirably adapted to the diffusion of happiness, the promotion of knowledge, the attainment of wisdom, and the progressive advancement and improvement of the race.

13. From the general adoption and prevalence of this philosophy, authenticated and enforced as we find it to be by the highest evidence and most authoritative sanction of reason, experience, and revelation, results of surpassing importance to the welfare of the race may rationally be anticipated. That knowledge which it most concerns all to possess,—the knowledge of the human heart, of the constitution of our being, the laws by which it acts, the faculties and powers of our common nature, their functions, uses, and operations, the limits within which they minister to our happiness and promote our improvement in wisdom, in virtue, and purity, and the boundaries beyond which, stretch out, in long perspective, the domains of guilt, wretchedness, and misery,—this knowledge, with all its illimitable consequences, and vast responsibilities for good or for evil, is brought within the range of all classes and conditions of men. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the monarch in his seat of power, and the laborer in his humble cottage, he who, enthroned in the majesty and might of moral and intellectual strength, dispenses the treasures of a wisdom gathered from the remotest and least accessible regions of thought and experience, and he to whom the higher influences of the world of mind must remain a sealed book, and whose solitary and unprofitable talent is buried in oblivion,—each and all are invited to read the open volume which faithfully reflects their several natures, and from its illuminated pages to derive that instruction most needed to redeem the errors of the past, and shed a benignant influence

upon the yet unsullied future. The important lessons thus widely proclaimed, like the good seed sown by the Great Teacher in the hearts of men, will meet with many, and often with insuperable, obstacles to its reception; and it may be long before it yields the rich and ample harvest, which it is destined, sooner or later, to exhibit. Often will they "fall by the wayside," unregarded and unnoticed; often encounter the "stony ground" of superficial minds, delighted at first, and pleased with the novelty, beauty, and sublimity of a captivating theory, but unfitted and undisciplined to stem the torrent of ridicule or reproach; and still more often will they become "choked among thorns," and overborne by the "cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches," the lusts of power, and the promptings of the passions. But an unwavering faith in the advancing progress of the higher and nobler elements of man's immortal nature, an undoubting confidence in his capacity to achieve a final and complete triumph over the depressing influences which have hitherto weighed down the elastic energies of his soul, and a full reliance upon the ever-present blessing of the Creator, induce the gratifying conviction that an abundant portion of the elevating and purifying principles which characterize the new philosophy, has been "sown on good ground," and will "bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold."

14. No one who has been accustomed to trace the progress of great truths in any of the various departments of science, of morals, or of religion, as they have been successively unfolded to the human intellect, will indulge the apprehension that the discoveries of Gall and Spurzheim are permanently to be affected by present indifference to their value, or the interposition of discouraging obstacles to their future promulgation. Elaborated and systematized as they have

been by the most enlightened and able philanthropists of Europe and America, and reduced to the compass of a clear, connected, and harmonious science, of surpassing interest and beauty, they will in due time assume the elevated rank to which they justly appertain. It is needless to advert to the multitude of instances where popular delusion, error, and ignorance, have denounced and proscribed those doctrines and their teachers, which after ages have consecrated and hallowed, and the universal sense of civilized humanity inscribed upon the imperishable tablets of the intellect and the heart. Neither the comprehensive and bloody edict of Herod, nor the infuriated passions of the Jewish multitude, nor yet the systematic and unrelenting cruelty of Nero, Tiberius, and Caligula, accomplished the extermination, or even the temporary suppression, of Christianity. Neither the fulminations of a powerful hierarchy, nor the maledictions of the multitude, deterred the master spirits of the Reformation from the prosecution of their great mission. The fagot and the stake, the cord and the dungeon, of ecclesiastical intolerance served only to nourish and strengthen the indestructible germ of moral and religious truth. Nor did the "old man eloquent," who proclaimed to a benighted age the theory of the earth's revolution, and the laws which governed the motions of the planetary orbs in their courses, quail before the bitter storms of obloquy and persecution which burst around his venerable head. In his gloomy dungeon this outcast from the pale of humanity, stricken down by the ban of a power which held uncontrolled supremacy over the minds of men, calmly looked forward to the assured recognition of his great discovery, and the ultimate universal acknowledgment of his benefactions to the race. The pages of ancient and modern history bear uniform testimony to the zeal and pertinacity with which mankind at all times,

and under all circumstances of intellectual or moral advancement, have denounced, proscribed, and punished their best benefactors. Notwithstanding the universal prevalence of this persecuting and intolerant spirit, truth has silently made its irresistible way; its progress, though slow, has been onward; and we are warranted in the belief, founded as well upon the experience of the past as upon the eternal laws of rectitude, that, in proportion as the obstacles to its advancement, arising from ignorance, prejudice, and passion, are temporarily multiplied and rendered formidable, its final triumph will be certain and complete.

> "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
> The eternal years of God are hers;
> While Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amid her worshippers."

In this enlightened age of the world, a philosophy professing to embrace within its comprehensive grasp the highest interests of humanity, recognizing and confirming the great truths of revelation, and announcing the fundamental conditions upon which happiness, virtue, and wisdom, may be attained and secured by each individual of the species, has nothing to apprehend from external violence or open persecution. It may be passed by with contumely or neglect; it may be rejected as unworthy of consideration by those who can perceive no beauty, harmony, or consistency with truth or reason, in its details; it may be denounced and proscribed by the ignorant, the superficial, and the self-sufficient; but the physical and the moral power to exclude its lessons of practical wisdom from the study and perusal of the multitude of reasoning and reflecting minds scattered over the broad domains of civilization, no longer exists. The enlightened founders of this philosophy have been gathered to their fathers; but their mantles have fallen on those worthy of fulfilling the high mission

with which they are charged; men of devoted earnestness and unsullied purity of character; desirous, above all things, of benefiting their race both in present and future ages; thoroughly conversant with the principles of mental and moral philosophy; deeply imbued with the genuine spirit of pure Christianity; and abundantly competent to the exalted task of instructing and improving their fellow-men.

15. Whatever differences of opinion may exist in relation to the minor details of the system to which we have adverted, it is undeniable that the elementary and essential principles of a philosophy so accordant with nature and truth, so intimately connected with the interests and welfare of every individual of the species, cannot fail to exert a powerful influence, present and prospective, on human character and happiness, on society, on civil and political institutions of every grade, on all the relations of domestic life, and, in short, on all the diversified machinery of civilization. A spirit of enlightened inquiry has already gone abroad; antiquated prejudices have been undermined; a new and interesting path has been opened up to the investigation of man's physical, intellectual, and moral nature; obstacles to the ascertainment of truth, hitherto deemed insuperable, have been removed; and principles elucidated, which, in their development, promise to reduce the system of mental and moral philosophy to the beautiful and orderly simplicity of the physical sciences. The principles upon which the progressive improvement of man's complex nature depend have been thoroughly analyzed, the true philosophy of education deduced from sound and incontrovertible premises, and the capacity of each intelligent individual of the race to secure for himself all the blessings belonging to his nature, and all the happiness of which that nature is susceptible, clearly demonstrated. The heavy

clouds of ignorance, which to so many thousands have hitherto concealed the bright sun of happiness, whose kindly rays might otherwise have cheered their weary path, may now be dissipated. The design and workmanship of the Creator in the formation and wonderful adaptation of that master mechanism, the human body, and the fixed and invariable laws of its constitution, may now be recognized and comprehended by multitudes whose existence has hitherto been a mystery and an enigma to themselves. The necessary dependence of happiness, peace of mind, and that deep, inward satisfaction which none but the wise and good experience, upon faithful obedience to the institutions of the Creator, may be fully appreciated; and questionings and doubts heretofore springing up in honest hearts concerning the justice and equity of the moral administration of that Creator with reference to the events of the present world—questionings and doubts founded upon an incomplete and imperfect view of the laws of being—will be satisfactorily solved. By a slow and laborious, yet persevering process; by gradually displacing the numerous and varied theories of the past, which have served only to encumber and darken the portals of knowledge and wisdom; and by careful and thorough observation, experiment, and reflection, a path has, at length, we may hope, been opened to the broad and solid foundations of truth and nature. Like those indefatigable travellers who perseveringly and painfully persisted in the immense and apparently hopeless labor of removing the accumulated rubbish which choked the entrance to the Pyramids, until their exertions were at length rewarded by the discovery of the magnificent chambers and wonderful architecture of the remotest antiquity, the founders of this philosophy, after long years of indefatigable research, succeeded in attaining a clear perception of the object of their

labors, and in indicating to those who shall come after them the means by which still greater and more important advances may be made. But, like those travellers, they have penetrated only to the vestibule of the immense temple before them; numerous undiscovered apartments doubtless remain to be explored, hidden treasures to be developed and appropriated, and the specific objects and uses of the whole and every portion of the vast structure to be intelligently displayed.

16. The goodness of Providence in the constitution of the moral and physical world, and in the benevolent adaptation of means to ends, is in nothing more conspicuously displayed than in the fact clearly unfolded by an intelligent acquaintance with the fundamental principles of human nature, that not only the desire, but the abundant means of happiness, have been conferred upon each rational individual of the species—a happiness essentially independent of external circumstances, springing from an internal impulse, and awakening the slumbering tones of those unearthly harmonies which have power to banish forever the usurpers of the moral kingdom of the soul. The teachings of that philosophy which exorcises the phantoms of passion, and the evil spirits of ignorance, delusion, and temptation; which reëchoes within us the notes of innocence, of pristine purity and unsullied youth; which reawakens in our breasts the high and holy aspirations of the spring-tide of existence, and renovates our wearied and care-worn spirits by the balmy and blessed influences of the higher and holier nature implanted within us,—comes to all "with healing on its wings." It smooths the asperities of life's rugged journey; causes the innumerable flowers, scattered with a bountiful hand over the daily paths of existence, to bloom with a grateful fragrance and sweetness; and diffuses over our whole

being that joy, and peace, and hope, which take fast hold of immortality.

"O! joy, that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!"
* * *
"——those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish us, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence; truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy."

17. Whence is it that, in the advanced stages of existence, the "sere and yellow leaf" of our being, the mind so loves to linger upon the scenes and associations of life's opening dawn? that the heart forgets its withering sorrows and its bitter experience, and often and fondly recurs to the elastic energies which prompted the glowing anticipations and bright hopes of childhood and innocence? The memories thus invoked come to us loaded with freshness and fragrance; with a vivid impression of happiness and enjoyment long unknown; with the distant echoes of a harmony, which has ceased to vibrate upon our blunted senses; with a soul-subduing gentleness, which has power to unseal the deep sources of feelings, whose destined current the cares and the passions, the anxieties and the sufferings, of worldly experience have choked and suppressed. None are so far beyond the pale of humanity, as to be inaccessible at times to these soothing and benignant influences of our mysterious nature. The conqueror, in his mad career of

crime, borne onward by the impetuous waves of passion, and revelling in feverish dreams of ambition, power, and fame; the miser, surrounded by his wealth; the sensualist, by his luxurious appliances; and even the doomed criminal, darkly brooding over his career of guilt, and its fearful retribution;—to each and all the visions of early life, of unsullied innocence and undimmed purity of soul, throng upon the mind, insensible though it may be to every other impression of goodness, of beauty, or of truth. It is the feeling which we may imagine our first parents to have experienced in all its intensity, when, after long years of wandering over the arid waste of a world no longer clothed, to their eyes, in its primeval freshness and verdure, they recalled the bright image of the Paradise they had forfeited,—its ever-present delights, its hallowed scenes of quiet bliss, its unceasing strains of celestial harmony, and all the pure and holy influences flowing from the immediate and pervading presence of the great Fountain of life, and light, and happiness. To us the moral is one full of interest and instruction. The gardens of Paradise are open to all; the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" is still standing in the midst; and the solemn injunction of the Creator of our spirits, warning us to beware lest we put forth our hands and take and eat of its forbidden fruit, is ever sounding in our ears. Shall this voice continue to be unheeded, and the arts of the tempter still prevail, until the flaming sword of the angel of retributive justice debars us forever from the Eden of our existence? Shall we not rather listen to the voice of God, speaking through nature and revelation; learn to know ourselves, and our whole duty; and cheerfully and intelligently fulfil the purposes and the end of our being, while we daily and hourly reap the rich rewards of wisdom and experience?

18. To the YOUNG,—"the innocent in heart and soul," for whom life still blooms in all the freshness and beauty of hope and truth, who bask in the bright sunshine of moral purity and peace, little dreaming of the countless perils which surround them, breathing the ethereal odors of a Paradise they have not as yet forfeited,—to such how earnest, how unwearied, should be our constant and most impressive admonition—Avoid the first approaches of the tempter; heed not for a wavering moment his subtle and fatal voice; wrap yourselves in the sacred mantle of your innocence, and repose in trustful assurance upon the promises of the Author of your being, the Dispenser of the rich blessings by which you are surrounded—blessings you cannot now appreciate, but which once lost can never be recalled. The conditions of present enjoyment and continued happiness are clearly unfolded to your mental and moral perception by HIM who called you into existence, and curiously moulded the constitution of your being. While those conditions are faithfully observed, that existence will prove a constant source of pleasure, an unfailing well-spring of improvement, a perpetual concord of sweet and harmonious influences. Around and about you, on every hand, are withered hopes, blasted expectations, irremediable sorrow, fruitless remorse, pain, anguish, disease, pre mature decay and death. Hope not to disobey the voice of God within your souls, and to escape these dire and bitter consequences of transgression. The records of human experience, from the creation of the world to the present hour, furnish not a solitary instance of such an exemption from the penalty denounced by the voice of the Almighty. Venture not, then, upon the fearful and most presumptuous experiment. Walk while you may in the placid shades of innocence and virtue; commune with the Being whose

presence will surround you at all times, and whose blessing, "even length of days and life forevermore," will consecrate and reward your obedience to his perfect laws.

> "So live, that when the summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan that moves
> To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,
> Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
> Chained, to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasing dreams."

## CHAPTER V.

# FORMATION AND DEVELOPEMENT OF CHARACTER.

1. The formation of character, from its incipient manifestation, through all its various stages of progressive advancement, to the period when death affixes its final seal to the record of human life, is subject to so many and such diversified influences, that any attempt minutely to trace its progress, or accurately to define the principles by which it may be regulated, must prove futile. Where the elements of mental and moral developement are inexhaustible, their arrangement in those infinitely varied combinations which make the character of each individual of the race so essentially to differ from that of every other, can be regarded neither with wonder nor surprise. It is a part of that stupendous and beautiful system of perfect adaptation and boundless wisdom which prevails throughout the universe, as well of matter as of mind; and while it effectually precludes analysis, impresses upon us the important conviction—a conviction which, amid the depressing scenes of time and sense, we are too often in danger of losing—that to each one of us is committed a peculiar destiny, which we are to work out for ourselves alone. While we cannot hope so to combine or to arrange the materials of mental growth and progress, which lie scattered in such boundless profusion around us, as to discover all their peculiar adaptations in the wonderful and mysterious fabric of existence, we may, perhaps, attain to some conception, however inadequate, of the solemn responsibility involved in the daily and hourly discharge of the

duties appertaining to human life; of the worth and intrinsic value of the soul, its powers, capabilities, origin, and destination; and the nature of that preparatory discipline, to which, in its present stage of being, it is, in the order of Providence, subjected.

2. From the cradle to the grave, the elements both of the physical and the moral world, which constantly surround us, are perpetually undergoing transmutation and change. Like the ample volume of the atmosphere, which presses upon us with an equal weight on every hand, those particles which are present, with an all-pervading influence, at one moment, are instantaneously succeeded by others in their turn; while the former have rushed onwards with an undiminished current to permeate the broad surface of humanity. Not unfrequently, the most apparently trifling events are fraught with the most momentous issues to the determination of character, as well as to the fortunes of individuals and the welfare of society. So finely spun is the web of human destiny, so interwoven and interlaced in endless diversities of combination, that nothing visible or audible, occurring in the wide expanse of nature and of art, can be said to be wholly without influence upon even its most casual observer. That overruling Providence, without whose special ordinance and note "not a sparrow falleth to the ground," in its supervision of the boundless universe, so adjusts the harmonious play of myriads of worlds and of systems, with their infinity of existences, to the apparently fleeting interests of time, and the most apparently trifling concerns of individuals, that "even the very hairs of our head are numbered;" and those occurrences which, in our ignorance and our weakness, we are accustomed to deem the merest chances of the passing hour, are dependent upon principles and subjected to laws as invariable and unchanging as are those by which the "stars in their courses" fulfil their appointed rounds.

If we will consent to pause in our thoughtless and careless career sufficiently long to apprehend the solemn and deeply interesting truth, shall we not find reason to believe that, at every instant of our lives, we are encompassed by innumerable agents, seen and unseen, silently weaving the thread of our destiny, and imperceptibly directing the current of our fate? Shall we not be convinced that, while the vast operations of creative wisdom and goodness are guided and directed with a view to the grand results of the combined whole, yet that no incident is permitted to occur within the range of our individual perception, which has not its special mission for us, and which does not, in some manner, immediately or remotely, affect our interests and well-being? In a word, shall we not find that we are surrounded with solemn, but eventful mysteries, moving among scenes and associations of momentous import to our destiny, and daily and hourly shaping the character of an existence which is to know no termination?

> "Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."

3. Whoever is accustomed to even an occasional process of self-examination cannot fail to have been conscious of the presence of powerful influences, which, from time to time, have affected his mind and swayed his actions, and given a more or less permanent hue to his character—influences, perhaps, which, "come like shadows, so depart," from the world of imagination, from the regions of the ideal, from the variegated and changing face of Nature, in her agitation and repose, her sublimity and her beauty; often too subtile to be detected and fixed in the mind, or to be recalled or traced to their source, and yet imbibed as a constituent portion of that mental and moral aliment upon which the soul exists, and from which, by its own intrinsic power, it derives the elements of progress and of growth. If, therefore, we would investigate those

elements of character which are best adapted to the harmonious developement of all the various faculties of our nature,—if we would direct the future pilgrim of humanity in that straight and narrow path which leads to life, and pleasantness, and peace,—we must descend at once to the deep fountains of the soul, and penetrate, so far as we may, through the aid of revelation and a sound philosophy, into the sources of human motive and conduct—the invariable well-spring of character and destiny. That mental culture which has been formed and is maturing upon foundations less solid, deep, and durable, than those which underlie the entire surface of humanity, is destitute of those elements of power, of expansion, and of strength, which are requisite to the perfect developement of the faculties with which every intelligent and responsible being has been endowed. Perfection or perfectibility has been written, in legible characters, on every emanation of creative wisdom and power; and we are not, for a moment, to indulge the idea that, in its greatest work,—the birth of humanity in the image and with the benediction of its Author,—a work designed to survive the catastrophe of the universe, and to exist when time itself shall be no longer,—any insuperable obstacle has been interposed to the ultimate attainment of the highest objects of intellectual, moral, and immortal being.

4. The earliest and most enduring foundations of character are laid in the unrestrained intercourse of the family circle, and in the institutions for elementary instruction. The ideals of excellence and the motives for exertion are first conceived from the lessons and the examples of home; and, whatever may be the tendency of the influence thus exerted, it is so far permanent, that nothing less than a complete revolution in character, effected by years of counteracting impressions, and the slow process and painful results of

experience, can efface the deep traces of its inscription on the mind and of its supremacy over the life. The natural and irresistible impulse of the child prompts him not only to venerate, but to imitate, to the extent of his capacity, the character, the habits, and the pursuits, of the parent; to mould the energies and the faculties of his own mind upon the model thus constantly before him; and to adopt, as the standard of his attainments, the intellectual and moral excellences or defects which are daily and hourly exhibited to his view. The same principle, although greatly modified in degree, prevails on the transfer of the child from the domestic hearth to the elementary school. The teacher succeeds to the authority and influence of the parent, while a new and vitally important element of progress is added in the intimate association which springs up with other and differently constituted minds. It is at this period that moral impressions are made with the greatest facility, and take deepest root. The earlier or later developement of the intellectual faculties depends upon a variety of causes, wholly or chiefly disconnected from the moral sentiments; and while the former are stimulated to action by their own intrinsic energy, or by the numerous objects of the external world, the latter are constantly and necessarily excited and affected by the passing incidents of each successive day and hour, and gather from thence those materials which are to compose the fabric of character. The adhesive tenacity with which first impressions retain their influence over the youthful mind, renders it morally certain that no subsequent developement, resulting from the experience of maturer years, will effectually obliterate those lessons, which, imbibed in the purity and innocence of childhood, sink deepest into the mind and most permanently imbue the heart. Well would

it be for the interests of humanity were parents and teachers more generally aware of the powerful elements of moral culture which they directly and indirectly control; of the solemn responsibilities of their position, and of the blessings which they might diffuse, the evils they might avert, and the lasting benefits they might confer upon civilization and Christianity, by an enlightened and conscientious discharge of the high duties they have assumed.

5. It is, however, always to be borne in mind, that the distinctive feature of humanity is individual responsibility, and its great characteristic, the capacity for indefinite progression. To an extent greater than most of us are aware, each individual is the artificer of his intellectual and moral, no less than of his mere worldly, destiny and fortune. The vast disproportion between the infant mind of the future philosopher or statesman, and the same mind in the full maturity of its strength and greatness, affords abundant testimony of its intrinsic capacity for advancement. Obstacles there may and will be to be encountered and surmounted. Each individual of the race finds himself, at every period of his life, surrounded by circumstances and events peculiar to his own condition, and demanding the exercise of a determination and a will, for which he alone is intellectually and morally responsible. The developement and culture of the mental faculties, and the consequent formation of character, are advanced by all the influences which are derivable from the external world of matter and of mind. To escape companionship with evil, we must indeed go out of the world: nor can that character be regarded as of a high order, which fears to face temptation, opposition, or error, whenever and wherever duty and truth require. It is from the prevalence of vice, of suffering, and of misery, that opportunities are afforded for the exercise of the greatest

virtues; and it is in the midst of a scene of trial, surrounded by guilt, by ignorance, and by error, that we are required to bring into active exertion those nobler principles which constitute the true elements of moral and mental greatness.

6. The general diffusion and progressive advancement of an enlightened civilization, based on the principles of a sound philosophy, and illuminated by the steady rays of Christianity, constitute an important element in the formation and developement of character. That condition of society in which the supremacy of the moral sentiments, if not, in all respects, practically carried into the conduct, is still universally recognized in theory, and uniformly inculcated by precept, is at an immense remove, in all that constitutes the well-being of individuals or communities, from that where lawless force predominates, and where each individual and each interest is regarded by common consent as the legitimate prey of superior physical strength, cunning, or craft. In the former, while the faculties of the intellect and the affections of the heart are expanding into those principles of action upon which the superstructure of the future character is to be erected, the pervading stimulus of public sentiment, as expressed in the writings, the discourses, and conversation, which the influential minds of the community are constantly giving forth, will so far fortify and strengthen virtuous resolutions, as to render them impervious, to a very great and steadily increasing extent, to the otherwise potent force of the vicious examples which are too frequently presented in the busy scenes of life. In the latter, the effect is directly the reverse; and the "still, small voice" of wisdom and of truth is sure to be fearfully overborne by the overwhelming predominance of the selfish and animal propensities, incessantly excited into undue activity by the powerful fascinations of popular applause, and un-

restrained by public sentiment. The moral and intellectual atmosphere which pervades a community where the great results of science, the well-grounded inductions of a rational philosophy, and the fundamental truths of revelation, are duly appreciated, is eminently favorable to the highest self-culture. The passions and propensities of the animal nature are more easily subdued and restrained; the innate dignity of humanity is more readily perceived and acknowledged; and the mind, sustained and invigorated by a clearer conviction of the intrinsic value of sound knowledge and moral discipline, if not as an end, yet as a constantly progressive and infinite series of means, steadily enlarges its powers, and extends its views over the broad and illimitable surface of thought and action.

7. The almost inconceivable multiplication of the means of knowledge which have resulted from a few of those great discoveries and inventions which immediately preceded the revival of civilization at the close of the fifteenth century, has, within the compass of comparatively a brief period, effected a radical revolution in the mental and moral, no less than in the physical world. The heavenly bodies, from an "o'erhanging firmament" of glittering stars, upon which the vivid imagination might inscribe and perpetuate the fabulous legends of traditionary lore, or superstitious awe or crafty guile attempt to decipher the hidden secrets of futurity, or to interpret the awful scroll of destiny, have become the vast theatre of Omnipotent Wisdom and Goodness—the outer courts of immensity—the entrance chambers to that universe "whose centre is every where and its circumference nowhere." The earth, from an extended succession of hill and valley, designed for the support of the vegetable, mineral, and animal creation, and resting upon some mysterious and undiscoverable foundation, has become the

external surface of one of the smallest of the planetary orbs, subjected to the intermittent action of pent-up elements, and the varying effects of a series of organic influences, which have for ages been engaged in modifying and changing its physical condition, and accomplishing the ulterior purposes of Providence in respect to its destination. The elements, from the dread ministers of wrath, have been transformed into the powerful but obedient servants and instruments of mind. The various properties of matter, from themes of barren and profitless speculation, have been converted into efficient attributes of practical science and attractive philosophy.

8. A transformation, not indeed so complete, but no less important, has been effected in the moral world. The highest good is no longer placed, even by the most superficial and least reflecting mind, in the gratification of the appetites and passions. The promptings of a higher nature are recognized, however dimly and inefficaciously, by the lowest order of intellect, and in the humblest department of the great social organization. The destructive conflicts of physical force, which during so long a period have desolated the earth, are rapidly disappearing, and giving place to the more powerful energies of mental competition. The master-spirits of the civilized world—those who wield the truncheons of command, and exert the widest sway over the destinies of nations and of individuals—are no longer the crowned heads, or the "great captains," but the philosopher, the statesman, the artist, the discoverer, and the teacher — those who, from the central and commanding eminence of some great and enduring principle, have spoken in their might to the sympathetic hearts and minds of the multitude, either directly or through the intervention of the gifted few who have caught, and faithfully transmitted to the universal ear, their "thoughts that breathe and words

that burn." It is in the midst of this progressive civilization, where, by a law of the moral world as inflexible and certain as those which govern the universe of matter, the vital principles of true wisdom, which have been discovered and applied by the pioneers of the mind, must ultimately pervade the entire mass, that the superstructure of character may be expected to assume its noblest and most harmonious proportions.

9. The highest results of civilization can be attained only under the guidance and pervading influence of pure Christianity; and the religious principle is, unquestionably, by far the most potent of the various elements which enter into the composition of character. This is the ultimate principle to which all of true greatness which the world has ever witnessed, or will ever witness, must be referred; and it is because, and only because, this principle, in all its beauty and sublimity, as defined and illustrated by the Great Teacher, has never been fully apprehended, that the highest attainments of science, the profoundest speculations of philosophy, the widest range of thought, and the utmost energy of action, have hitherto failed to accomplish those ends, in the elevation and advancement of humanity, which they were designed to subserve. That religion, alone, which inculcates "peace on earth and good-will to men;" whose Founder announced, and in his own person exemplified, the future life, its principles, its purity, its "exceeding great and precious promises;" which imbodies in its precepts and its doctrines the cardinal principles of mental and moral progress, and the results of a wisdom immeasurably transcending that of earth in its highest flight; that religion, alone, which, while it tasks the noblest faculties of the most comprehensive intellect, adapts its teachings to the earliest appreciation of infantile innocence, and the most immature

capacity of guileless simplicity,—can effectually discipline and mould the character to the accomplishment of its high destinies.

10. The view which each individual takes of his own origin, the objects and purposes of his existence, his ultimate destination, and the conditions upon which his well-being here and hereafter depends, necessarily exerts a pervading power over his life, whether of action or of thought. If he faithfully strives to bring into harmonious accordance the convictions of his understanding and the successive events of his existence; to reconcile his idèal standard of duty with the practical discharge of his various obligations to his Creator, to society, and to mankind; and to carry out, amid the disturbing influences of the world without, and of his own heart within, the principles which his unclouded judgment has sanctioned and adopted,—the progressive developement and healthy growth of his intellectual and moral being will be inevitable and rapid. On the other hand, if he proves false to those convictions,—if the promptings of his better nature, the "voice of God within his soul," the admonitions of conscience, and the dictates of his highest reason, are disregarded or subordinated to the imperious requisitions of the passions,—the effect upon the gradual elaboration and final direction of the character is equally certain and equally rapid. There is another phase of mental phenomena, which most frequently presents itself to our observation, constituting a medium between these two extremes, and resulting in that apparent indecision or inconsistency of character which seems to defy all attempts at analysis, and renders its ultimate tendency dependent upon the final predominance of the good or the evil principles which maintain an incessant struggle for supremacy over the life. However frequent or rare the alternations of victory, or prolonged the triumph

which either principle may achieve, the effect upon the character is equally pervading and equally important.

11. All external human action, and consequently the entire web of human life, as it manifests itself in conduct and character, emanates from mental volition; and that volition is determined by a mental process, more or less complicated in proportion to the energy, strength, and comprehensiveness of the intellectual and moral faculties, and the discipline to which they have been subjected. A deep and pervading sense of the presence, and an enlightened conception of the attributes and moral government of the Omnipotent and Omniscient Spirit of the universe, furnish motives and incentives to a course of action, from the earliest dawn of moral responsibility to the close of our earthly existence, which no other source can supply; and if to these be superadded the sanctions which reason and revelation have unfolded, based upon the immortality of the soul and a future existence, a direction is given to the character and the life, and an intensity and energy of purpose, and an inflexibility of will conferred, which subjects all minor considerations to the paramount supremacy of duty and conscience.

12. There is no page in the history of mankind upon which we dwell with deeper interest, and to which we more often recur when we desire to strengthen our faith in the intrinsic nobility of our nature, than that which records the trials, the reverses, the sufferings, and the martyrdom of the devotees to great principles; the triumph of mind, in its integrity and its fidelity to truth and duty over the combined elements which oppose its upward progress; and the resulting harvest of knowledge, and of mental and moral advancement, which invariably spring up from the good seed thus sown. On the other hand, there surely can be no more melancholy reflection than that which

is induced by the contemplation of the long annals of vice and crime, of violence and guilt, which form the great staple of written and unwritten history; the product of ignorance, of error, and of undisciplined passions; the rank and poisonous weeds of the rich, but untilled soil of the human mind. The universal diffusion of Christianity throughout the civilized world; the numerous and varied illustrations of its principles and doctrines, which an increasing appreciation of its intrinsic excellence and true value is constantly supplying; and the periodical enforcement of its solemn and interesting truths, which the several denominations of worshippers at one common altar have established and secured,—afford abundant facilities for the inhalation of the purest element of intellectual and moral growth. Undoubtedly, many minds of native vigor and strength are induced to avoid this unfailing well-spring of mental excellence from early prejudice, from the lamentable perversion of the precepts of Christianity, or from the still more lamentable, because more pervading and comprehensive, feuds and collisions of religious sects. A judicious and salutary discrimination, however, and a sincere and earnest desire to pursue the narrow but clearly defined path of true wisdom, will not fail to dictate a conscientious adherence to the spirit and the truth of inspiration, when once its authenticity and its source are determined. These, the almost unanimous acquiescence of the highest minds, during a period of eighteen centuries, while it cannot and does not exclude the obvious and paramount necessity of personal and thorough investigation, places beyond the pale of a rational skepticism.

13. The successive events and changing vicissitudes of life variously modify and deeply affect the formation of character. There are few subjects of reflec-

tion more sublime than that which is presented by the infinite diversity which pervades the physical and moral universe. So far as our limited faculties are able to discern, no two objects in the vast immensity of creation, from the least of those atoms which are revealed by the microscope to the most distant of the orbs which astronomical science has brought within the range of human vision, are in all respects uniform, either in their structure, or in the objects they are designed to subserve. The boundless resources of creative wisdom and goodness are nowhere more distinctly perceptible than in the wondrous adaptation of the various faculties of the mind to the external world, and to the moral administration of a superintending providence. There are the most abundant reasons for believing that every incident in the life of the humblest as well as of the most exalted individual, every action which he is called upon to perform, nay, perhaps every thought of his heart, every emotion, every impulse of his moral nature, may exert, directly or indirectly, an influence not only upon his own well-being, but upon the well-being of some, at least, of his brethren of the human family. Upon himself, that influence, whatever it may be, enters into, and forms a component part of his character; and, fugitive and evanescent as may be its immediate effect, becomes part and parcel of his moral being, and can no more be resolved into non-existence, than a particle of matter can disappear from the physical universe.

14. But it is with more exclusive reference to those strongly defined events of life which cross the path of all, and form prominent landmarks on the surface of existence, that allusion has been made to this element in the formation and modification of character. Whether we regard the revolutions in the history of empires, nations, communities, or individuals, which,

in their results, effect a radical change in the course of events by which they were preceded, or those less striking, because more common incidents, which are daily and hourly transpiring, and which affect the lives, the health, the fortunes, and the happiness of mankind,—it is certain that each of these events, as it occurs, marks an epoch of greater or less importance in the developement of our moral being. The uses of adversity, and the ministration of sorrow, of pain, of crosses, and of disappointment, are manifold and salutary. The ravages of death, in all its various forms, nipping the opening blossom of infant existence, striking down the youth in his prime, and the man in his maturity, sundering the dearest ties of life, or gathering into its granary of mortality the aged "like shocks of corn fully ripe,"—whenever and wherever the bolts of the great destroyer are sped around us,—"must give us pause" in our onward progress, and recall us to salutary reflections, and a sober review of the various problems of our mysterious being. In the temporary abstraction from the busy avocations of time and sense which events like these induce,—brooding over the ruptured and bleeding tendrils of affection, of hope, and of anticipation,—while in beautiful accordance with those organic laws of the mental as well as of the physical constitution which the Creator has benevolently adjusted to the requirements of our nature, the wounds of the heart have time to cicatrize, and its sundered ligaments to readjust themselves,—a renovating process is accomplished in the character and the life. We feel that "a change has come o'er the spirit of our dream," that we are not, in all respects, what we were; and when we go forth again to mingle with the busy current of humanity, it is with a chastened appreciation of its true value, and an increased conviction of "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."

"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists — one only — an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

15. To conclude: the noblest attainment in the process of that enlightened discipline of the intellectual and moral faculties, which constitutes character, is undoubtedly to be found in the abiding and pervading influence of that catholic spirit of active benevolence, comprehensive charity, and imperturbable equanimity, which, recognizing in every individual of the human family, however low or degraded, the ineffaceable stamp of a common brotherhood, knows how to make due allowance for the infinite diversity of circumstances and condition, and, in the habitual and cheerful discharge of every individual, social, and moral duty, calmly reposes in the undoubting assurance of an ever-present Providence. To a mind so disciplined, the manifold voices of nature are attuned to a harmony refined, elevating, grateful, and accordant with every faculty.

"Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow—not a cloud imbibes
The setting sun's effulgence—not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasure unreproved."

The vivid enjoyment of an existence invigorated by the free exercise of its own buoyant energies, enlightened and directed by progressive knowledge, undisturbed by the tumults of passion, and finding its appropriate and genial aliment in the cultivation and developement of its higher nature, and of all the virtues and graces of humanity, while it constitutes and secures our highest happiness, fulfils the objects and

purposes of that being which was conferred upon us by our Creator.

16. It is a beautiful provision of our nature, fraught alike with intimations of its immortality, its native grandeur, and upward tendency, that visions of greater excellence than any we can realize in our every-day life; aspirations for a higher and a nobler sphere of action than we find attainable within the confined limits which encompass us on every hand; and a faint appreciation of ideal beauty and sublimity, which yet, with our limited faculties, we cannot hope, except in imagination, to comprehend or to realize,—often hover around us in our better moments, and seem, as with the whisperings of angels' voices, to bring us the intelligence and the foretaste of a brighter and purer world. There are depths in the mind of every intelligent human being to which the shafts of philosophy have never yet penetrated; wells of living water, whose sources lie concealed far beneath the visible surface of character or emotion, which nevertheless are accessible to him who faithfully explores the deep mysteries of his being, and which, when touched by the magic wand of truth and nature, can cause "the wilderness and the solitary places" of passion, of error, and of guilt, to "bud and blossom as the rose." "There is a one heart for the whole mighty mass of humanity, and every pulse in each particular vessel strives to beat in concert with it." That millions of the race pass through the world in ignorance of the capabilities of their nature, of its innumerable chords of harmony, and its myriad sources of enjoyment,—and that millions, perhaps, in all coming time, will overlook the flowers of happiness scattered in bounteous profusion around their daily path, in the vain pursuit of unattainable and imaginary sweets,—militates in no respect against the truth of this sentiment; and, while the reflection that this is, and will be, the wayward fortune

of humanity, should induce deep humility in view of the errors, frailties, and weaknesses of our common nature, the expanding circle of light, increasing by little and little with every revolution of the wheels of time, may hopefully be deemed the harbinger of a brighter and better day. "The Eden of human nature has indeed long been trampled down and desolated, and storms waste it continually: nevertheless the soil is still rich with the germs of its pristine beauty; the colors of Paradise are sleeping in the clods; and a little favor, a little protection, and a little culture, shall show what once was there!"

## CHAPTER VI.

## INCONSISTENCY OF CHARACTER.

1. THE beautiful fiction pervading the ancient oriental mythology, which recognized the existence and alternate influence of two opposite powers, the one of good and the other of evil, faithfully imbodies the result of human wisdom, unenlightened by inspiration, in its attempts to comprehend the physical and moral government of the universe. The harmony and beauty which every where prevail in the material world, and the wonderful and mysterious adaptation of the innumerable works of creation, above, around, and beneath us, to the purposes they were designed to subserve, manifest, to the most ordinary intellect, a comprehensive benevolence, an omnipotent wisdom, and an all-pervading presence. In proportion as the powers and faculties of the mind expanded to a more enlarged apprehension of those principles, the conviction of an infinite and boundless beneficence would become more and more irresistible; and if, at times, the incomprehensible combination of the elements assumed a fearful and appalling shape, spreading devastation and terror around, and frightening the astonished nations from their propriety, the controlling influence which restrained the wildest fury of the storm, the earthquake, or the tornado, and prescribed its limits, is recognized as a spirit of goodness, as well as of power. The invariable succession of the seasons; the grateful alternations of light and darkness; the regular arrival of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, were felt to be the gifts of a

benevolent being; gifts subservient to the constant requirements of the intelligent creation, and wisely and mysteriously adapted to every circumstance of life. There was nothing in the vast range of creation spread out to view, from the illimitable expanse of the universe of worlds and systems of worlds revolving around, to the countless myriads of existences diffused throughout the immensity of space, and imperceptible to ordinary vision, which did not indicate the universal prevalence of infinite wisdom, combined with infinite love. The earliest legends, and the most cherished and ineradicable traditions of every nation, and every people of whose existence we have been apprized, have coincided with the record which Christianity recognizes as of undoubted inspiration, in the belief that the primitive condition of the human race was one of unmingled happiness, innocence, and purity. Equally general and universal has been the belief, that this enviable state of felicity was almost immediately superseded by a lamentable contrast; that a spirit of evil interposed its fell power to blast the prospects of humanity, and wither its fairest flowers of hope; and that an unequal struggle has from thenceforward been maintained, throughout all succeeding time, between two powers of immortal origin and co-existent nature, for ascendency over the present and future destiny of the intellectual and moral faculties of man. Nor is it at all surprising, that the most superficial observation should have been early struck with the disparity so strikingly manifested between the natural and the moral world; or that it should have attributed the predominance of evil in the latter to the deleterious influences of a power acting in diametrical opposition to that which presided over the former, and countervailing its efforts for the elevation and purification of the affections and the lives.

2. History, observation, and experience, alike com-

bine to teach us that there is a constant struggle going on in the mind of man, under almost every conceivable circumstance and situation in life, between its higher nature and its prevailing inclination—its upward tendency and the powerful current of passions which sweeps it onward to degradation and ruin. By the proper cultivation of our intellectual and moral faculties, and by availing ourselves of the benignant influences by which we are every where surrounded, "both when we sleep and when we wake," we find ourselves abundantly capable of attaining to a high appreciation of our nature, the great purposes of our existence, and our final destination. The path of duty is plainly marked; the avenues which lead to happiness are invitingly open; and we are well assured, in the striking and forcible language of the greatest of the prophets, that "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quiet and assurance forever." Every dictate of our unprejudiced and sober judgment prompts us to avoid the degrading and withering influences of vice, and guilt, and crime. They are all and each unworthy of our noble and upward-tending nature; they convert the harmony, and beauty, and magnificence of creation into discord, disorder, and confusion; they blunt the finer perceptions of the mind, and pervert the best and purest affections of the heart, and they lead us, by little and little, from all those sources of enjoyment which were designed by the Creator of our spirits to cheer the rugged paths of life, and conduct us, through the "beggarly elements of this present world," to another and a better existence hereafter. All these considerations are constantly pressing upon us, with a force proportioned to their vast importance; and yet how inconsiderable a portion of our lives exhibits their operation! How insensibly and how naturally, it may almost be said, how unavoidably, do we relapse from the deliberately

formed resolutions of our better judgment and better nature, to the weaknesses and frailties, the errors and omissions, the evil passions and corroding vices, which sink us to the level of the "brutes that perish." With an abundant appreciation of the dignity and excellence of virtue,—fully realizing the "daily beauty" of an innocent and a blameless life, and its comparative exemption from all those manifold sources of anguish, and bitterness, and trouble, with which the world is full, forcibly apprehending the capabilities of our intellectual and moral powers to assert their superiority and predominance over the vicious propensities of our nature,—we yet worship the radiant image of virtue and purity at a distance, while we bring all our choicest and most valuable gifts, and lay them upon the altars we have consecrated to worldly ambition, avarice, and passion. We leave the paths of innocence when we lay aside the sports and pursuits of childhood; and we open the book of knowledge, imbibe the counsels of wisdom and experience, and bring forth from the repositories of the past the varied lessons which they contain, only to burden our consciences, at the last, with the additional and fearful responsibility involved in a clear perception of our duty, and our guilt. "We know the right, and yet the wrong pursue." In our closets, and in the secret meditations of our hearts, the "still, small voice" of wisdom and of truth admonishes us that we are but "strangers and sojourners" for a brief and rapidly passing season here; that to us is committed a high and a glorious mission, and for us is reserved a destination surpassing our most exalted conceptions; that even here, in these low grounds of flesh and sense, and surrounded on every hand by the corrupting influences of perverted and misapplied humanity,—innocence and integrity, humility and simplicity, lead to happiness and peace of mind; and that, unequal as may be the struggle, and painful and ex-

hausting the contest with the evil principles of our nature, the victor's crown may be won at last, and the struggle and the contest forgotten in the triumphant result. Armed at all points with a philosophy so noble and so congenial to our best feelings, we go forth into the busy world with a serene brow and a purified heart, with a full determination to resist the first approaches of evil, to discharge our whole duty, to walk in the narrow path of innocence and uprightness, and to illustrate and adorn the capabilities and excellences of our immortal nature. Alas! for the inconsistency and waywardness of the human character! A host of evil passions, whose name is Legion, beset us on every hand; unexpected obstacles are interposed to our best and strongest resolutions; our judgment becomes suddenly and fatally perverted; our medium of vision deplorably obscured; the world asserts its power, and we look in vain for the soothing and renovating influences of that harmony which shall again restore our spirits to peace and quietness.

3. Those who fancy the existence of unmitigated and irredeemable evil in any of the human race, however abandoned, are unacquainted with the mysterious depths of the heart of man. Such an hypothesis has no foundation in experience, in reason, or in Scripture. There are those who seem, indeed, to have prostituted all the energies of their nature to the influences of vice and crime—who are apparently abandoned to all sense of virtue, of morality, or religion—dead even to remorse, and wholly removed, so far as human penetration can discover, beyond all the restraints of conscience, and all dread of retribution here or hereafter; and yet we are clearly guilty of unauthorized presumption in denouncing the ban of humanity upon the heads of the most irreclaimable of our species. The best of men are not exempt from grievous and deplorable error; and the lesson most strikingly and forcibly

impressed upon his followers by Him, who only, of all the dwellers upon earth, was exempt from human frailty, was that of uniform forbearance in judging of the character of others, and of solemn warning against an uncharitable condemnation of their actions or motives.

4. Passing from the field of sacred to that of profane history, we are frequently presented with striking contradictions and contrasts of character, for which we shall often labor in vain to account, upon the ordinary principles of motive and action. A few of these must suffice for the illustration of the subject under consideration. No individual of ancient times appears to have approximated in a greater degree to the sublime and elevated standard of Christian philosophy, or to have attained to a more correct appreciation of the beauty and value of moral truth and virtue, than Socrates. His clear and powerful intellect dispersed at once, with scarcely an effort, the mists and shadows which ignorance and superstition had for ages accumulated in the mental and moral horizon; and he was enabled steadily to look upon the bright beams of that "Sun of Righteousness," which was destined, at a later period, to transmit its rays to the human family, unobstructed by the intervening clouds of superstition and error. To him it was permitted to look beyond the "chances and changes of this mortal life," to another and a better state of existence, to a far distant future, where the mind and the soul should develope all their powers, and fulfil a destiny for which the narrow boundaries of time and the encumbrances of mortality were unfitted. All the varied evils of life passed him by only to strengthen his virtuous resolutions and purify his mental vision; and the near prospect of an undeserved and an ignominious death served only to bring out, in all their beauty and sublimity, those

priceless treasures of a philosophy revealed to him alone, and exceeded only by its fuller manifestation in the revelation of the Saviour's gospel. And yet, with all these elevating truths struggling for utterance within his mighty mind—amid the full perception of the beautiful and the true—this extraordinary and gifted philosopher found himself unable, at the last, to abandon the senseless idolatry of the age in which he lived. While his clear and unperverted intellect recognized, and his pure and enlightened heart worshipped, from its inmost depths, the "Unknown God," his latest and most urgent directions to his friends were to sacrifice, in his name, upon the idolatrous altars of an absurd and baseless mythology.

5. It is needless to do more than refer, on this occasion, to the weaknesses and inconsistency of character exhibited by the illustrious Roman orator; at one time electrifying the senate and people by the brilliancy and the power of his unrivalled eloquence, and at another wasting the energies of his intellect in the most puerile and unmanly complaints at the fancied neglect of his countrymen, and the vicissitudes of an untoward fortune; now treading, with equal and dignified steps, the loftiest and most commanding heights of philosophy, and now abjectly shrinking from the "pitiless peltings" of the storm, whose fierce elements, unconscious of their power, he had, with a characteristic vanity, contributed to gather over the horizon of his country's hopes. But as the eventful and variegated scene drew to a close, his better angel triumphed. There was too much of elevation, too much of purity, too much of ingenuous simplicity and sterling worth of character, hopelessly to sink before the "evil spirits' withering thrall," and with a mournful presentiment of the calamities which were impending over his beloved Rome, and which he could no longer

avert, he submitted with dignity, and without a murmur, to his inevitable fate.

6. To come down to a later period: who is not familiar with the deplorable frailty which cast a deep shade over the high character, and imbittered the latter days of that great man, who was at once the pride and bulwark of the English chancery, and the ornament of human nature? With an intellectual capacity of surpassing breadth, and depth, and clearness; with faculties capable of perceiving and analyzing, at a glance, the most abstruse and complicated moral and metaphysical problems, yet unable to resist the insidious approaches of corruption, and lending his powerful mind to the operation of the most unworthy and degrading influences!

7. The gifted sons of genius—they of the "eagle eye and tireless wing," who have soared far beyond the ordinary flights of the intellect—frequently afford but too melancholy an illustration of this inconsistency of character in the waywardness and perversity of their career. We are indebted for many of the most noble, exalted, and pure strains of devotion and piety, in "words that breathe and thoughts that burn," to those whose lives were little in accordance with the elevation of their intellectual conceptions and manifestations. Notes of surpassing sweetness, harmony, and power, have but too often emanated from minds where the undying vulture of remorse has fastened its restless beak. Thousands of unperverted hearts have responded in raptures to the unearthly aspirations and sublime imaginings of bards, who, at the moment, perhaps, were revelling in the wildest excesses of the bacchanalian feast, and whose high talents were prostituted at the lowest shrines of vice and guilt. The glowing imagery and immortal thoughts, which are destined to stamp their indelible impress upon suc-

ceeding minds in all coming time, are often, like the costly gems of the Indian sea, formed and matured by the incessant irritation and diseased action of the vital faculties.

8. Nations and communities, as well as individuals, furnish instructive illustrations of this peculiarity of character. To go no farther than our own continent, what strange infatuation must have taken possession of the strong-minded and clear-headed band of Pilgrims, flying from religious persecution in their native land, when they unfurled the banner of intolerance in that of their adoption, ere its soil had been fairly reclaimed from its savage occupants? For the sake of worshipping the common Father according to the dictates of their own conscience, and of enjoying their religious creed free from molestation or arbitrary proscription, they counted no sacrifice too great. The disruption of all the ties which connected them with the land of their birth and the associations of their early years, the voluntary abandonment of all the blessings of civilization and refinement, of country and of home, for the known perils of the ocean passage, and the unknown dangers, and toils, and privations of the wilderness in a far distant land,—all were overlooked and disregarded in view of the promised blessings of civil and religious liberty—a boon justly regarded as beyond all price, and for the attainment of which no exertions could be misapplied. The enterprise was, indeed, a noble one; nor did the Pilgrim Fathers of New England over-estimate its importance to themselves, to their country, or to posterity. But it is deeply to be regretted that these single-minded and hardy pioneers of the North American forests should have esteemed it necessary, in the prosecution of their mission of civilization on the shores of this new world, thus early to erect the standard of persecution for conscience' sake, and to reënkindle the fires of intoler-

ance, for the suppression of what they too, in their turn, deemed heresy. Various apologies have, indeed, from time to time, been devised in their behalf, derived from the peculiar situation of the infant colony, and the uniform and prevailing practice of the age. The phenomenon is one, nevertheless, so strongly marked, and so wholly at variance with the line of conduct which ordinary reasoning would seem to have dictated, that it may be enumerated as one of those instances of inexplicable inconsistency of character so often to be met with in individuals, and from which nations and communities are by no means exempt.

9. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a God! And yet what is this quintessence of dust?" "With the talents of angels," men may, and often do, "become fools!" They press onward and onward in their deluded career, and while blindly pursuing the vain phantoms of the world, plunging deeper and deeper, at every step, into the gloomy recesses of vice, they yet bring their accustomed oblation to the altars of virtue, and wonder that they hear not the responses which greeted their ears in the early days of innocence and peace. In their blindness, ignorance, and fear, they are tempted, like the warrior king of Israel, to invoke the awful spirit of the buried past; they desire to look into the impenetrable future, to unveil the records of destiny, and read the hidden counsels of fate. The phantoms thus presumptuously invoked a disordered imagination brings up in fearful array, and they shrink in terror from the withering rebuke of their own awakened consciences. Well will it be, if, with David, through tribulation, and sorrow, and anguish of mind, comfort and peace may at last be attained; satisfied how little is known of the mysterious

depths of the human heart; how illusory and how vain are all the dreams of perfection here below; how transitory and fleeting the best resolutions; how contradictory and inconsistent the moral and mental character of man; and how deplorable the waywardness and perversity of conduct and action manifested under the most favorable condition of our nature.

10. The existence and the predominance of moral and physical evil, in a world where all things else bear the impress of unbounded and limitless benevolence, is a problem which it is not given to philosophy to solve. We may speculate upon the deep mysteries of creation and providence; we may task our intellectual powers to their utmost tension, in our vain endeavors to analyze the elements and trace the movements and the laws which control "this brave, o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fires;" and we may, which is far better, silently, and thoughtfully, and reverentially, wonder and adore, where we may not comprehend; but we cannot "put forth our hand, and take of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and eat and live forever," until the promised advent of

> "that glorious day,
> When, throned on Zion's brow,
> The LORD shall rend the veil away
> That blinds the nations now."

11. The time has been, and that at no great distance from our own days, when the multiplied discoveries of science, in the natural and physical world, and the researches and speculations of philosophers in the world of mind, were deemed alike at variance with the paramount authority of revelation, and as, at best, an attempt on the part of presumptuous and misguided men to attain to the knowledge of that which transcended the limited prerogative of humanity. It seems now, however, to be conceded that true sci-

ence, whether physical, intellectual, or moral, cannot, by any possibility, be at variance with revelation, in any of its forms. Truth is uniformly and necessarily consistent with itself. While, therefore, the imperative dictates of sound philosophy command us to reject any and every hypothesis of science, ethics, or morality, which contradicts the authentic testimony of revelation, a reverential and sacred regard for truth and nature calls upon us, in an equally authoritative manner, to reject such an arbitrary interpretation of the latter as shall be found unwarranted by reason, observation, and experience, and contradictory to the direct evidence of our unperverted senses. Interpretation, only, is to be subjected to this discriminating process; for an enlightened and attentive investigation and examination of the respective claims of natural and revealed knowledge will show them to be uniformly and invariably consistent and harmonious in every essential requisite. The imperishable tablets of the Christian faith can never be marred or dimmed by their contact with true science, sound philosophy, and advancing civilization and knowledge. On the contrary, the law and the testimony there inscribed by the finger of Almighty Wisdom, will become the more legible, luminous, and clear, in proportion as they are subjected to the tests of an expanded and enlightened observation, the practical deductions slowly evolved from the experience of ages, and the progressive discoveries in science and the arts. They have nothing to fear from the utmost advancement of human wisdom and improvement; and it is only when the pestilential miasma of passion, guilt, and crime, sheds its baleful influence over the human intellect, obscuring its perceptions, blighting its energies, and perverting its developements, that we are called upon to draw the line of demarkation between religion and science, reason and revelation,

the God of the Bible and the Author and Disposer of nature.

12. When we look abroad upon the troubled ocean of human life, and witness the constant and restless agitation of its surface, strewn with the melancholy wrecks of ages,—now dashing into fragments many a noble and stately bark freighted with the highest hopes of nations, communities, and individuals,—and now whelming under its impetuous and undiscerning billows the nameless, humble, and obscure voyager upon its trackless path, experiencing, in its ceaseless commotion, apparently no interval of repose, and no relaxation of its mad impulses,—we may well ask ourselves what power, short of Omnipotence, can control its excited and turbulent career, or say to its rebellious fury, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed!" There is a point beyond which philosophy cannot penetrate; where reason and intellect, and all the faculties of the human mind, are powerless and impotent; and where nothing remains to the loftiest genius, in common with the humblest and most uninstructed range of thought, but to wonder, to adore, and submit. Even the human mind—that most stupendous workmanship of infinite wisdom—that emanation from the Divine essence—has its laws, which it cannot disobey, if it would—its limitations, which it may not overpass. There are mysteries connected with our existence here which eternity alone can solve; relations which flesh and blood can never penetrate; links which earthly vision can never discover; causes beyond the cognizance of mortality, and effects incapable of being fully traced by any intellectual powers conferred on mere humanity. It is idle—it is worse than idle; it is impious—to indulge the vain fancy that any conceivable advancement of the race in wisdom, any possible condition of society, or any attainable purifica-

tion of the grosser elements of our nature, can suffice to perfect our knowledge of the moral government of the world in which we live, or initiate us into the grand scope and ultimate designs of the Creator, in the multifarious and complicated labyrinths of human existence and destiny.

13. Nor is it in any degree necessary, for our happiness here or our welfare hereafter, that the inscrutable records of the Book of Fate should be exposed to our view. It requires but a brief experience to enable us to comprehend the existence, and become aware, in some small degree at least, of the influence of those elementary laws of being which circumscribe us on every hand; to learn that it is only by a general obedience to these laws that we can secure an exemption from the most formidable evils which encompass us; and to be assured that, by a systematic and habitual neglect, or a gross infraction of any of these laws, we incur a penalty proportioned to our departure from their requirements. It is only necessary to extend, and faithfully apply, the principle thus deduced from our ordinary experience, to enable us to arrive at the more important, but not less obvious inference, that the laws thus prescribed are uniform in their operation, invariable in their nature, unyielding and inflexible in their demands upon our obedience, and admitting of no departure from their requisitions, however inconsiderable, without exacting the penalty. But this is a conclusion by no means intuitively, or without difficulty, attained in practice, under the most auspicious and favorable circumstances incident to humanity. The records of history, and the process which passes within our own breasts, as leaf after leaf of the volume of existence is unfolded to our perception, demonstrate that the lessons which bring with them increased wisdom, increased knowledge of the human heart, increasing happiness and progressive virtue, are slowly

and painfully evolved from the shattered wrecks of the past, from the consequences of manifold and long aberrations from rectitude, from incessant observation and combination of the diversified elements of experience, and from a bitter, but thorough, novitiate in the stern school of adversity and suffering. Of the hundreds of millions of human beings whom each successive generation, as it passes on, sends "to take their places in the halls of death," how comparatively few is the number of those who have been able to solve the deep problem of their own existence and being, or to ascertain and apply the unvarying and necessary connection between the laws of nature and of its Creator and the enjoyment of happiness! how vast the number of those who have ignorantly or presumptuously, but constantly, violated those laws, and paid the bitter penalty in wretchedness and misery, physical and mental, protracted with occasional and evanescent intervals of comparative enjoyment to the verge of a longer or shorter career!

14. We are unwilling to concede, at least to the extent claimed by some severe moralists of every age, the existence of those moral and intellectual phenomena, which have afforded frequent and mournful themes for the indignant reprobation of the wise and good; where the path of duty has been plainly apprehended, the guilt and the consequences of a departure from it clearly perceived, and yet that departure deliberately determined upon, and persisted in, with a full knowledge that happiness and peace, innocency and virtue, were irrevocably renounced. We are disposed to view the melancholy obliquities of our common nature in a more favorable and charitable light, and to attribute the lamentable dereliction from its original purity, which the world has ever witnessed, and which succeeding ages will probably long continue to witness, rather to ignorance of the fundamental laws of

being than to a bold and enlightened, but most presumptuous defiance of those laws, with a clear apprehension of the inevitable consequences. It cannot be, that a reasoning, intelligent, and well-balanced mind, should voluntarily choose to descend from the proud eminence of virtuous innocence to the lowest depths of profligacy and vice; or that a human being, endowed with the most perfect physical organization, and painfully alive to the nicest sensibilities of its nature, should not only look with indifference upon a life of protracted suffering, opening no vista of hope, and admitting of no alleviation or solace this side of eternity; but should, as the result of his unbiased will and free choice, link his destiny to such a career of ignominy and degradation, so withering, so hopeless, and so accursed by God and man. It is believed that no one can discover, upon the most faithful examination of his own mental and moral faculties, any well-founded conception, any feeling or emotion corresponding to a principle so revolting to humanity, any law of his own being from which he can legitimately infer a result so deplorable. The Author of our existence has, indeed, rendered such a combination morally impossible. It would be in palpable and direct opposition to all we know, or can, upon rational principles, conceive, of Infinite Benevolence and Wisdom, that seeks only the highest good of all its subjects; it would present an anomaly in the moral machinery of the universe,—the intermingling of elements, in one common nature, in irreconcilable enmity with each other, governed by contradictory laws, and leading to the most opposite and discordant results. That "the heart of man is *deceitful*, above all things, and desperately wicked,"—that its every "imagination is *evil*, and that continually," the experience of all ages, and the solemn declarations of revelation, coincide in establishing; but we may surely be indulged

in the supposition, that the depravity and wickedness which have uniformly characterized mankind, have not been of that deep dye which *fully comprehended* and deliberately rejected its own highest happiness, which clearly discerned the inevitable retributions of disobedience, and yet "rushed upon the thick bosses of the buckler" of the avenger. We are aware that this is, in some measure, debatable ground; but we are also aware that its boundaries have not been so strictly defined, as to preclude us from the effort to reclaim millions of benighted wanderers from the heavy imputation of apostasy from the pale of humanity. While we cannot but lament the deplorable infatuation which has deprived the great mass of our fellow-men, in every age, of the natural heritage of happiness, bestowed upon them at their birth, and condemned them to misery and remorse, and the complicated ills of a degenerate world, we may, at least, be permitted to indulge the consoling reflection, that this severe and calamitous portion was not the necessary result of a nature *altogether* perverted from its original purity, and *wholly incapable* of producing less bitter fruits. In our investigations into the motives, conduct, and character of our fellow-men, it is much wiser, and far less dangerous, to err on the side of charity and mercy, than their opposites; and certainly, if it be our aim to advance the standard of intellectual and moral improvement, and to elevate the condition of our species, it is equally unphilosophical and unjust to assume, in the outset, that the task is hopeless and impracticable.

15. The conclusion to which these observations tend is obvious. Man is susceptible, in his own proper nature, of the highest intelligence, virtue, and consequent happiness, which was originally bestowed upon humanity by Creative Wisdom and Benevolence; but, by reason of his peculiar mental and moral organiza-

tion, adapted to progressive advancement, but left free to work out its own destiny, and, in consequence of the powerful and constantly accumulating evil influences which surround him from infancy, he contracts, insensibly, and at a very early period, the *tendency* to go astray from the narrow and restricted path of duty. The impulse which hurries him on from one successive step to another of error, guilt, and retribution, is seldom, if ever, the result of his own deliberate choice and unbiased will, acting under an intelligent and enlightened knowledge of the laws of being, and of the consequences of their infringement. He is impelled by the operation of strong and unchecked passions, the consequences of a neglected or perverted education, in some of its numerous forms, and from ignorance, in a great measure, of his own nature, capacities, and destination, inability to withstand temptation, and the presence and influence of a great variety of powerful external and internal impulses; the voice of reason, judgment, and often of conscience, is gradually and imperceptibly stifled; the intellectual functions transmit erroneous information; the moral faculties lose their ascendency; and the empire of the mind degenerates into hopeless anarchy and inextricable confusion.

16. From this view of the subject, the immense importance of an enlightened and extended system of physical, intellectual, and moral education, is obvious—one by which, at the earliest period when such knowledge can be comprehended, we may be accurately informed of the peculiar constitution of our nature, its powers and faculties, their modes of manifestation, and their various operation, whether in accordance with their own innate force, or influenced by the external world of matter or of mind. Upon this broad and comprehensive foundation a superstructure may be reared, of solid and durable materials, fitted to re-

sist the incessant elemental warfare of the passions, and providing an impregnable rampart against every hostile attack. If it be true, that the great mass of crime and wretchedness, of suffering and of woe, with which earth is filled, may be traced, directly or remotely, to ignorance; if it be also true, that all the happiness and enjoyment, of which humanity is susceptible, proceed from and are the invariable and necessary result of an adherence to the laws impressed by the Creator upon all the workmanship of his hands; and if, moreover, such an adherence is entirely practicable and attainable, and becomes, instantly, its own reward, considerations of the most solemn and momentous import, as well to ourselves as to the race to which we belong, and involving the welfare of the present and of future generations, impel us to begin the great work of an education which shall be commensurate with our high nature and destiny, and which shall enable us so to live as to secure the utmost happiness of which our being is susceptible.

17. But we are met upon the threshold of our investigations into this subject by a multiplicity of objections, founded upon its visionary and theoretical nature; its want of adaptation to the present, or any reasonably probable condition of society, and its utter impracticability in a world constituted as we find ours to be, and where so much of evil and so little of good prevail. We are told that man is now, after the lapse of some sixty centuries, the same, in all essential respects, as when the race was first created; that during the intermediate time, worldly wisdom, at least equal to any of which the present days can boast, has illumined the moral and intellectual waste which has ever existed; and repeated and clear revelations from Heaven been communicated and disseminated, wherever civilization had penetrated; and that it is

absurd to suppose that the heated imaginations and enthusiastic dreams of a few secluded philosophers or peripatetic philanthropists of the present century should have discovered the grand *arcanum*, for which ages upon ages have so laboriously and fruitlessly toiled—the attainment of a pure and unvarying standard of happiness and enjoyment—the solution of the deep, and hitherto inexplicable mystery, which hangs over the troubled dream of life. Many of these objections are plausible, at least, and deserving of serious consideration; others are believed to be unfounded in their assumptions, vague and inconclusive in their deductions, and baseless in their conclusions. They must be met, however, and, if possible, satisfactorily refuted.

18. Nothing, certainly, can be more erroneous, or less in accordance with the truth of history, when philosophically regarded and thoroughly analyzed, than the inference that mankind have hitherto made no progress in substantial knowledge, virtue, and happiness. On the contrary, there can be no doubt that, in exact proportion as civilization has extended itself, and facilities for the ascertainment and application of physical, intellectual, and moral truth been afforded, the condition of the race has been sensibly ameliorated, and the happiness of individuals and the welfare of communities promoted. Without attempting, at this time, to trace the rapid progress of science and the arts, which accompanied the advancement of the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and many of the nations of the East, in even the imperfect civilization to which they were able to attain, during, comparatively, an early period of the world's history, or the elevation and purification of manners and morals which distinguished the prevalence of such temporary periods of refinement and relaxation from bloodshed and civil and foreign war, as the turbulent ambition of

the ruler permitted, the introduction of Christianity, and its immediate and resulting consequences, furnish abundant materials for a triumphant refutation of the objection under consideration. The rapid dissemination of the Scriptures over a great portion of the civilized world laid the foundation for an indefinite progression, not only in all those refinements and graces which communicate to society so much of its value and usefulness, but also in all those virtues of the heart which make up the sum of individual and general happiness. This progression has, indeed, been slow and gradual, often, for a long succession of years, and even of centuries, imperceptible and impalpable; but although its effects were not visible upon the surface of society, and although the precepts of Christianity were but imperfectly comprehended at best, and not unfrequently grossly perverted to a convenient and authoritative subserviency to the ambition, the interest, the profligacy, and oppression of the scourges of mankind, its influences were, nevertheless, silently preparing the way for the regeneration of the race. The mighty tide of intellectual, civil, and moral improvement, which burst upon the nations at the close of the fifteenth and the commencement of the sixteenth century, was the sudden and overpowering triumph of the long repressed, but steadily accumulating energies of the human mind, expanded by the effectual workings of pure Christianity in the minds of the multitude and their leaders and guides. And who will maintain that the condition of society and of individuals, wherever the light of intellect, civilization, and Christianity has extended, is not now incalculably superior, in all the elements which constitute scientific and moral power, than when the era of the reformation dawned, or when its triumph, in the effectual prostration of the "gods of the old idolatry" was completed? If, then, from the earliest periods to which history

conducts us, we are enabled to trace a gradual, but palpable advancement in knowledge, and wisdom, and power; if the accumulated stores of experience, the ample and comprehensive truths of revelation, the constant observation of Nature, in her manifold forms and combinations, and the successive and permanent discoveries of science and of art, have accomplished the great work of communicating to man even an indistinct and imperfect knowledge of his powers and faculties, and have demonstrated his capacity for, and his tendency to, improvement and progression, the argument based on an opposite conclusion falls to the ground.

19. It is further urged against the adoption of the views we have been endeavoring to expound, that it is unreasonable and absurd to suppose that the great and the good of former ages, in their unwearied search for the elements of virtue, the secret of happiness, and the keys of knowledge, should have overlooked or disregarded principles so fundamentally connected with the well-being and progress of the race. So far as this objection refers to the great moral lessons sought to be inculcated, it is wholly destitute of foundation in fact. In every age of the world a voice has gone forth, from the commissioned oracles of the Almighty, proclaiming the supremacy of the moral nature, announcing its divine origin, its limitless capacities, its high responsibility, and its immortality. The unvarying testimony thus borne to the truth, in all times, and among every people, remains unshaken, either by the mode of its reception, or the fruit which it has produced. The good seed has been abundantly scattered, wherever humanity has existed to be invigorated by its influences; and if the soil, through inattention, neglect, or unenlightened culture, has failed to produce the expected harvest, that failure must be attributed to its legitimate source. When, however, we

consider this objection with reference to the progress of scientific knowledge generally, it is undoubtedly true that we of the present century are in possession of results intimately affecting our individual and social welfare, which were not only wholly unknown for a long succession of ages, but beyond the conception of the wisest philosophers and most finished scholars of ancient times. Scarcely four centuries have elapsed since the discovery of the art of printing and of the mariner's compass—events which have exerted such an immeasurable influence on the diffusion of knowledge and the advancement of civilization; and in less than half that period a complete and most beneficial revolution has been effected in the cultivation of the whole circle of arts and sciences, by the substitution of the inductive philosophy of Bacon for the vague theories and unfounded generalizations of the masters of the schools. The motions of the heavenly bodies, the laws by which their magnificent evolutions are governed, and the relations which our own planet sustains to the universe of worlds around us, are of comparatively recent discovery. The sciences of chemistry, mineralogy, and geology, so intimately identified with a rational knowledge of the powers, resources, and elements of external nature, are as yet in their infancy; and the relative influences of organic and inorganic matter, of man and all the vast machinery of the material world which surrounds him, are only beginning to be comprehended and appreciated. How important, then, that our minds should be ever open to the unprejudiced reception and dispassionate consideration of truth, under whatsoever guise it may present itself, and however much it may conflict with our preconceived ideas!

20. Considered with reference to ourselves alone, the knowledge of our nature, and of the immutable laws of the Creator stamped upon it, involves interests

of the most momentous magnitude. But when we consider the subject on a more extended scale, and with reference to the whole family of man; when we look forward to the influence which an enlightened understanding of the laws of intellectual and moral being shall exert, in all coming time, upon the happiness and destiny of the human race; to the elevation of our common nature, which must inevitably follow from obedience to the dictates of unperverted reason and undoubted revelation; to the high standard of moral virtue and sound philosophy, which a consummation so grand and desirable cannot fail to induce; the achievements of intellectual greatness and strength for which the past has been distinguished in the annals of science and of history, will be seen to bear no comparison to the vast and comparatively unexplored field which lies in all its magnificent grandeur before us. What has been accomplished will be regarded as the elementary studies of the infancy of the race; the preparatory discipline and instruction which precedes the work of education. What remains to be accomplished will be looked upon as the great and worthy business of a life which is to experience no termination; a work to be commenced here, but carried on throughout the limitless ages of eternity. It is thus that we are to accomplish the gradual purification of our nature from the multiplied corruptions which must surround it, in its best estate, in this present world, and its perfection in another state of being, where its energies will be permitted indefinitely to expand themselves, unalloyed by the baser influences to which its earthly associations are constantly tending.

## CHAPTER VII.

## PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

1. The great experiment of self-government, conceived and carried into execution by the American people, on the broad basis of free institutions, has fully realized the most ardent hopes of the friends of rational liberty in every section of the globe. To perpetuate those institutions; to carry out, in its most extended details, the grand scheme of republican freedom; and to disseminate throughout the vast borders of our Union the full enjoyment of those blessings which are secured by our unequalled form of government, not only constitutes the duty, but should form the highest pleasure and ambition, of every patriotic mind. That these desirable objects may be fully attained, the more general diffusion of knowledge, throughout every avenue of society, is indispensably requisite. It is not enough that every citizen should possess the rudiments of learning, or that amount of instruction and information, merely, which will enable him to transact the ordinary business of life, for this would be to make the great cause of mental and moral improvement stationary. The requirements of the age, the exalted position we occupy as a nation, the hopes and anticipations we have excited, and the rich promises our past history has given, alike forbid us to repose upon the laurels we have already acquired, or to rest contented with the standard of excellence to which we have attained. We owe it to those who shall succeed us in the enjoyment of the noble inheritance bequeathed to us by the men of the revolution,

that the rich soil of civil and intellectual freedom shall be cultivated to the extent of the means in our power; that the capabilities of the unfettered mind shall not be retarded or obstructed, in the pursuit of its high destinies, by the withering influence of ignorance, or the poisonous exhalations of vice.

2. The continued prosperity and onward career of nations depend upon the wise and proper use of their own energies. The seeds of their dissolution are indeed within themselves; but the fruits of anarchy, licentiousness, civil broils, and ultimate destruction, spring not up until the soil is prepared by the fatuity and mismanagement of those most deeply interested in the result. The splendid superstructure our ancestors have reared; the unparalleled prosperity which has hitherto attended the operations of our civil, religious, and social polity; the mighty improvements which the present century has witnessed in the arts and sciences; and the elevated position we have been enabled to occupy among the nations of the world,—all these commanding advantages impose upon us responsibilities which can be met only by the consecration of our best faculties and unremitted exertions to the cause of individual and national happiness, knowledge, and improvement. We need not be told of the dangers which surround us, in exact proportion to the continued success of the bold experiment upon which we have ventured. We need not be pointed to the melancholy examples which crowd the pages of ancient and modern history, to warn us against the enervating influences of uninterrupted prosperity. Materially as our institutions differ, in their essential features, from those of any preceding age, and striking as may be the contrast between the present and the past,—in all that concerns us most to know, the constitution of human nature remains unchanged; and the admonitions of wisdom and experience, and the ready

suggestions of our own minds, combine to teach us, that on the prevalence of virtuous dispositions and the spread of an intelligent and cultivated public sentiment, the great foundations of our liberties and privileges must forever rest. This cardinal truth cannot be too often or too forcibly impressed upon our population. The very assent which every reflecting mind gives to a proposition so well understood, and so obviously correct, may have a tendency insensibly to weaken its practical importance, and to prevent the energetic adoption of those effective measures which alone can test our abiding sense of its soundness and vitality. Were it even possible for the complicated machinery of government to go on, and the fabric of our institutions to be preserved against the attacks of foreign or domestic enemies and the corroding effects of time, without the progress of knowledge or the presence of an enlightened and uncorrupted state of morals and civilization, of what avail would be the barren pride of national existence? Who would prize the beautiful and polished casket, in the absence of the rich treasure it was formed to enclose?

3. In the progress of our national history, we have now arrived at a point where it becomes our imperative duty to pause, if need be, in the career of opulence, and energy, and enterprise, which has hitherto marked our course, and enter upon a new and not less delightful and useful field of labor; to exchange the empire of matter, at least to the extent to which it has heretofore engrossed our attention and occupied our time, for the empire of mind. Our institutions are now placed, by the wise and enlightened policy of the successive statesmen who have graced the republic from its birth, upon a permanent and abiding basis. Our foreign relations are those of uninterrupted peace and amity, and no apprehensions exist of any important change in this respect for the future. Our inter-

nal polity is conducted, in all its extended details, with perfect harmony and unity, diffusing all the blessings of a well-ordered and effective government through the various ranks and occupations of society. The current of our prosperity as a people, though agitated occasionally by those fluctuations incident to all great combinations of the elements of wealth, yet flows on in a majestic and resistless tide, enabling the most unbounded enterprise to compass its ends, and the most inordinate ambition for gain to hope for the fulfilment of its aspirations. No more favorable opportunity could be presented for the cultivation of those substantial qualities which are to form the basis of our future and permanent prosperity, to direct the minds and mould the character of the rising generation, and to disseminate far and wide the seeds of those enduring virtues, upon which the character and future prospects of our republic are to depend, when the heads and the hands which now sway its destinies shall be mouldering in the grave.

4. If we are wise, considerations of the highest import will induce us to watch over the early developements of mind in those whose education is committed to our charge; to strengthen those propensities which, when matured, are to contribute to the happiness and well-being of the human race; to check, in their bud, those dispositions which, in their growth, will cast a dark shade over the prospects and hopes of the future; to foster those institutions of learning where all that is valuable in after life receives its germ; and to elevate and purify the fountains of public sentiment from which proceed those streams of influence, action, and motive, which irrigate and fertilize, or render desolate and barren, the extended field of civil and social intercourse. We are all of us deeply sensible that upon the judicious cultivation of the intellectual and moral faculties of our nature, much, not only of useful-

ness, but of happiness and enjoyment, depends. If the mind is suffered to run to waste, and the weeds of vice to spring up unchecked and undisturbed, the ordinary occupations and pursuits of life, the race of ambition, the exertions for wealth, the innumerable sources of pleasure, cannot restore the healthful tone of contentment and peace which is forever lost. We have it in our power to do much to relieve the society which is destined to succeed us from the evils which are now experienced. Whatever course we adopt, our impress for good or for evil must be left upon the characters and the minds of those who will follow us on life's busy stage, and we *cannot* be indifferent to the future, if we would. We should appreciate correctly the position which we occupy, and the convictions of our judgment should assume a more practical cast, and induce more systematic and energetic efforts in the discharge of the high duties incumbent upon us.

5. The untiring philanthropic enterprise of the present age has evinced its zeal for the more extended and general diffusion of knowledge, under circumstances apparently the most unpropitious to its full accomplishment. In many parts of Europe, where the human mind has been fettered and enslaved for centuries by the iron domination of feudal and aristocratic institutions, the unaided energies of a few comprehensive and benevolent minds have laid the foundations of an enlarged and practical system of moral and intellectual education upon the broad basis of republican equality. In Prussia, Switzerland, Scotland, Holland, and more recently in France, the attention of government, as well as of individuals, has been drawn to the early cultivation of the human mind, and to the encouragement and liberal support of institutions established for this great purpose. Individuals of commanding talents and undoubted abili-

ties have devoted, in many instances, their lives and fortunes to the amelioration of the condition of the human species, by the judicious and expanded developement of their mental, social, and physical faculties. Schools of superior excellence and discipline have been established and maintained for a long series of years, and the results of this persevering and elevated system have far surpassed the hopes and expectations of its most devoted friends. In some instances, the alarm and jealousy of the constituted authorities have been excited at the rapid progress of sentiments and principles, whose ultimate tendency they could not fail to perceive was unfavorable to the permanency of the present order of things; but the public sentiment was found to be so strongly enlisted in favor of the continuance of a system of instruction so admirably adapted to the requirements of the age, that all opposition proved unavailing, and the governments themselves gradually afforded their countenance and efficient support to the animated efforts of the public teachers.

6. The institutions of the celebrated Fellenberg, in Switzerland, accompanied by his genuine philanthropy and devoted zeal in the cause of human improvement, contributed, in a very material degree, to elevate the standard of intellectual instruction. The harmonious combination of all the elements requisite to the formation of a perfect character, in the system administered by that great and good man, forms the distinguishing characteristic of his comprehensive plan of education. The great deficiency which was found to exist in the well-meant endeavors of those who had preceded him, consisted in the partial and unequal developement of the mind as well as the body; and the thorough and practical reform effected by the assiduous labors of Fellenberg and his interesting family has received the approbation and sanction of the most enlightened and intelligent in those countries where its

surpassing excellence has received the test of experiment. Perhaps no more genial soil, considered in all the aspects which it presents to a contemplative mind, could be found, for the effectual maturing of all the details of a complete and finished system of mental, moral, and physical education, than the romantic and peaceful valleys of Switzerland; and the schools at Hofwyl, under the immediate superintendence of this venerable apostle of intellectual improvement, were long the Mecca, around whose shrine the friends of education, throughout the civilized world, thronged to copy and to admire.

7. Prussia has, for several years past, been eminently distinguished for the comparative perfection to which her systematic plans of popular education have been carried. This system may be said to have originated in the fostering and truly enlightened policy adopted by her illustrious monarch, Frederick William, who, in this respect, truly and well deserved the endearing appellation of Father of his country. Aiming, in an enlarged and comprehensive spirit of philanthropy, to diffuse the blessings of education throughout the broad extent of his dominions, he scattered institutions of learning, and encouraged their support and maintenance, wherever the wants and requirements of the people seemed to demand. Countenanced by an authority so illustrious, these institutions continued to multiply and to expand, and, under the control and direction of governmental agents and enactments, form, at this day, a leading portion of state polity, under the fostering influence of which the happiest results may be anticipated in the future character and acquirements of a numerous people. A complete revolution has already been effected in the manners and habits, the pursuits and prosperity, of the nation: and although it could hardly be expected that a fo dable opposition should not occasionally be enc

tered on the part of those "whose craft was in danger," the energy and firmness of the government, in the prosecution of its noble undertaking, has hitherto risen superior to every obstacle in the way of its success. Education has not only been brought within the reach and at the command of every family in the state, but its advantages have been enforced upon the negligent and the careless by a policy which can hardly be censured in a government constituted like that of Prussia, however impracticable it might be regarded under the operations of free institutions.

8. The system of parochial schools in Scotland, with the improvements which upwards of three centuries have gradually introduced in a country distinguished, in many respects, for its intelligent and orderly population, has produced the most favorable state of things, with reference to the progress of education in that interesting quarter of the globe. The high degree of perfection which prevails in other portions of the continent has not, indeed, as yet, been attained; but the increasing demand for intelligence and knowledge indicates the continued approach of that spirit of enterprise and philanthropy, which will not stop short of a fundamental reform, in all those departments of knowledge which are susceptible of beneficial improvement.

9. In Wurtemburg, Baden, Hesse, Bavaria, Silesia, and most of the states formerly composing the Confederation of the Rhine, the means of education have been greatly extended within the past ten years. Amid all the disturbances and agitations which have surrounded them at no great distance, and under circumstances the most unfavorable to the hopes and anticipations of the great body of the people, they have determined to commence the work of national and individual reform, by disseminating the elementary principles of instruction throughout their borders. Na-

tional schools have every where been established, at great expense and labor. Almost every parish and hamlet participates in the benefits and advantages of education, and a certain portion of instruction is required by law, while every inducement is held out by the liberal policy of government, as well as of individuals and associations, to the attainment of an enlarged course of learning and information. These efforts have been effectually seconded by those most deeply interested in the result; and a spirit extensively prevails, throughout all grades of society, from the highest to the lowest, favorable to the most complete and extensive developement of the enlarged views of the established authorities.

10. In France and Holland, the result of several commissions, under the direction of some of the ablest friends of education, to foreign institutions, and particularly those of Germany and Switzerland, has induced a more systematic and thorough organization of the department of public instruction, and elicited a deeper interest on the part of the great mass of the people. The advantages of education are enjoyed in a much superior degree than formerly, and the reformation already effected has been most sensibly felt in its operations on the morals, habits, and dispositions of the inhabitants. Much, however, remains yet to be accomplished, before France will be able to assume an equal station, in this respect, with her eastern neighbors.

11. From a comparison of the progress made, in this respect, in the United States, and particularly in our own state, with those nations where the advantages of education are most extensively in operation, we have the most abundant reason for self-congratulation. Although but few, if any, of our higher institutions of learning have obtained the perfection
nessed in some of the European states, ..

intelligence, derived from our admirable system of common school education, are far more extensively diffused. Without the necessity of resorting, in any degree, to compulsory measures, the proportion of those who are, under that system, furnished with the benefits of instruction, during the greater part of the year, to the number within the age ordinarily allotted to education, exceeds, by far, that of any other country in the world. The foundations of moral and intellectual improvement are sufficiently broad and extensive, and could we only so far divert our minds from the immense variety of interests with which the enterprise and energy of the age has surrounded us, as fully to appreciate the responsibilities devolving upon us, nothing more would be necessary to enable us to assume that commanding position, with reference to the progress of intellect, which the world expects at our hands. Here, in this favored clime, in this enlightened age, in the midst of unexampled prosperity, individually and collectively, and prompted by every inducement which can appeal to the noblest and best feelings of our nature, we should be wanting in duty to ourselves, to our country, to posterity, and to the world, if we neglected to carry, to their utmost practicable perfection, the theory and practice of MENTAL, MORAL, SOCIAL, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION.

12. The spirit of the age is essentially peaceful. After the experience of nearly a quarter of a century of prosperous quiet and repose, it would require a strong and powerful incentive to arouse the civilized nations of Europe and America to the bloody arbitrament of the battle-field. The assertion and maintenance of great fundamental principles, a general awakening of the nations of the continent to the rapidly expanding idea of LIBERTY and REPUBLICAN EQUALITY, or some formidable combination of the great pow-

ers against the rights and interests of the lesser, may indeed, in the progress of events, again convulse kingdoms and people with sanguinary wars, and upturn the ancient depths of governmental sway. The European world may, even now, be on the brink of such a terrific volcano. Certain it is, that the signs and portents of the times, in no inconsiderable degree, indicate a coming eruption—a fierce and fiery mingling of the elements of human passions, human suffering, vengeance, retribution, and bloodshed, out of which, and through which, though the period may be remote and long postponed, will emerge a new and renovated system, based on the eternal laws of TRUTH and RIGHT. However this may be, the present, outwardly at least, is peaceful, and *progressive* in all the arts of civilization, in all the refinements of science, in all the blessings of education, moral virtue, religious culture, social happiness, and individual advancement. A standard has been erected, towards which every thing seems rapidly tending; an elevated standard, which the intellect and the heart have combined to fix; a standard not capable of being reached in a day, not in years, perhaps not even in ages; but the very struggle for the attainment of which strengthens, ennobles, and purifies our nature, improves and adds dignity to our humanity, and raises us in the scale of being. We have already accomplished much. The schoolmaster has been abroad, and his footsteps are distinctly visible in the sweeping career of enterprise which has characterized the century now nearly half elapsed, in the conquest over what were once deemed moral and physical impossibilities, in the aggregation and concentration of powers heretofore widely diffused, and dormant in their strength, toward objects worthy of their united effort, and in the systematic and determined exertions of individual and associated mind to

root out long-established errors, destroy inveterate prejudices, check the growth of evil passions, and give a new direction and a new and vivid impetus to the irresistible powers of the human intellect. Within the last half century, a *new power* has, apparently for the first time, been discovered, and is now sought to be brought into action, and its capacities fully and completely developed; and this is the power of the *masses*. For thousands of years the machinery of society and of government seems to have rolled on under the guidance of emperors, kings, and nobles, the wealthy, the high-born, and the titled, without the slightest recognition of man *as man*, of the multitude, of the people, except when such recognition was forced upon the hereditary lords of creation by the outbreak of some irrepressible burst of popular fury; and then the progress of the anomalous power was watched, and its final disappearance hailed with the same emotions with which the transit of some deadly and destructive, but unusual and unexpected, malady was wont to be regarded. Now, a *third estate*—not in name only, but in stern reality—is beginning to make itself felt in the midst of the old established governments, with a power which threatens its speedy and certain elevation to the dignity of a *first estate*; and here, where it is not only the *first*, but the *sole* estate, it has become the effective material upon which EDUCATION, and SOCIAL, MORAL, and RELIGIOUS CULTURE, are working out their great lessons of mental, moral, and political regeneration.

13. The tendency of all this is, doubtless, to make mankind better, wiser, and happier, to extend and widen the sphere of knowledge, to develope the innumerable sources of individual and national prosperity, and to distribute more equally the bounteous gifts of Providence to our race. But there is danger that

the energies of this newly-discovered power may be overtasked in the eager desire to put forth its immense strength upon objects unattainable *now*, and *at once;* or, if attainable in part, incapable of producing the beneficial end which may ultimately reasonably be expected. There are many great designs yet to be accomplished, but which the present generation can *only* design; many a noble edifice is to be erected, the *corner stone*, only, of which can be laid by the men of the present day. It was enough for the good king of Israel, in ancient times, that "he had it in his heart" to build a temple to the Lord; the execution of his pious design was left to his successor. So with the all-aspiring spirit of philanthropy and benevolence which so strongly characterizes the present age. It may be enough, in the wise orderings of Providence, that it has produced the grand and magnificent ideas of UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION, and UNIVERSAL FREEDOM; the completion of these great undertakings must be bequeathed to the generations that shall succeed us. In the mean time, we shall do well, with the provident king of the Jews, to mature and perfect the conception, accumulate and gather together the materials from every region and every shore, put in requisition the immense resources of every clime, and, having thus discharged our whole duty in a spirit of conscientious and enlightened obedience to the dictates of sound wisdom, leave to those who shall come after us the responsibilities of carrying out our great designs, in such a manner as shall be found most compatible with their relative importance.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## COLLEGES, ACADEMIES, AND COMMON SCHOOLS.

1. The higher institutions of learning, scattered throughout the United States, have doubtless exercised a beneficial effect upon the cause of mental and moral improvement. It is, however, conceded on all hands, that they have not yet attained that high standard of excellence which the demands of the age and the genius of our government require. Nor was it to have been expected, in the unprecedented rapidity with which a nation of freemen have risen to wealth and prosperity, that those substantial elements of greatness, which are to cement its noble proportions in its maturity and vigor, should have assumed, at once, the form and consistence which time alone can fully develope. We have been pointed to the colleges and universities of the old world, and asked to compare the reputation and the merits of our proudest seminaries of education with those time-honored monuments of science and the arts; but have those who would undervalue our progress in this respect reflected upon the immense disparity, not only in the means and resources at our command, but in the duration of our national existence? The hoarded wealth of an overgrown aristocracy and the immense patronage of a royal treasury have not yet been poured into the laps of our literary institutions, and the axe of the woodman has hardly ceased to resound in the neighborhood of the stately edifices consecrated to learning. The men upon whom their endowments and destinies wholly depend are the same who have made the wilderness to give

place to the abodes of civilization, who have built up our cities and villages, and given that irresistible impulse to enterprise and industry, to agriculture and commerce, whose abundant fruits are every where around us. What wonder, then, that we are unable to compete with the advantages and facilities afforded by the ancient repositories of wisdom, magnificence, and affluence, which abound in the cities of Europe? Have we not rather cause to be astonished that our citizens have been enabled to intersperse so much of the permanent and the lasting with the hastily constructed establishments of a new world and a new order of things?

2. It is, moreover, undoubtedly true, as a general proposition, that the character and excellence of our higher institutions must be graduated, in no inconsiderable degree, by the standard and requirements of the elementary schools, and the state of public opinion. If these are satisfied with mediocrity; if the great concerns of public instruction are left to regulate themselves as they best may; if the great mass of community neither exhibit nor feel any peculiar interest in the progress of knowledge, and are contented that the minds of the young shall mature or deteriorate, as circumstances shall give a bias to their developement—it can hardly be expected that a more refined and elevated tone should be communicated to the establishments which are to prepare their inmates more immediately for the active scenes and pursuits of life. If the fountain is neglected, and suffered to accumulate impurities, they must necessarily pervade the course of the stream, and we cannot reasonably anticipate that its waters should be clear and transparent at any advanced stage of their progress. The attainment of intellectual and moral strength is gradual and regular. The mind does not step at once and intuitively from its leading-strings to maturity

greatness; nor can it be made to do so by any combination or arrangement of artificial means: any neglect, therefore, which it suffers in its first advances, any indifference manifested to its early struggles to comprehend the world around it, and the mysteries of creation and of knowledge, forms a serious and often a fatal encumbrance to its subsequent career, which no superiority or excellence in the opportunities afforded it for its final preparation can adequately compensate. There is no peculiar virtue in the mere name of a college or university, which should exempt its inmates or its teachers from the ordinary operations of well-settled and fundamental principles. The same amount, quality, and degree of learning which are to be found within walls of high-sounding titles and extensive repute may be brought within the legitimate range of those institutions which are accessible to the most humble and straitened circumstances, provided, only, such transition is sustained by the general requirements and intelligence.

3. In this country our students are prepared, if prepared at all, for their entrance into the higher grades of literary institutions, by a course of instruction in the various elementary schools. This course is often, from a variety of causes, which will hereafter be more particularly enumerated, superficial in the extreme; and yet it may, and does, in a great majority of instances, enable the student to pass the formal and requisite examinations, preparatory to his admission to our colleges and universities. Depending, as many of these do, principally for support upon the number which is enrolled on their catalogue, the avenues to their halls are not uniformly guarded with the utmost strictness, and liberal allowances are made for the diversity which must necessarily be supposed to have prevailed in the preparatory discipline of the candidates. During the whole term of their collegiate course, a formal

routine of instruction is ordinarily adopted, which severely tasks the faculties of the slow-moving intellect, while it falls essentially short of the genius and abilities of the more ripe scholar. The one is condemned to incessant labor, in order to sustain a respectable standing among his fellow-students, while the other, whose perceptions are more rapid, whose genius is better adapted to the pursuits of literature, or whose opportunities have been more extensive or better improved, is under the absolute necessity of spending a large part of his time in listless idleness or desultory and aimless acquirements. The mental discipline of these institutions is, moreover, from the systematic arrangements incident to every department, and which long usage has, in some measure, sanctioned, illy adapted to supply any of those numerous deficiencies, which are so often found to exist in the previous studies and attainments of their inmates; and cases are not unfrequent, where the possession of a degree, or even the enjoyment of the honors of a college, have been found not inconsistent with the most deplorable ignorance and the most superficial acquirements. These are errors, however, which time will abundantly correct; errors, in some respects, incidental to all systems of education, and peculiarly so to those which have not existed sufficiently long to derive the full benefits of wisdom and experience.

4. If we institute a comparison, in this respect, with other countries, we shall have no reason to look upon the progress we have already attained in maturing the details of our system with any feelings of dissatisfaction, or any consciousness of inferiority. In a great majority of cases, no connecting link exists in the institutions of the old world between the elementary or popular schools and the universities and colleges. Those who receive their education in the former seldom aspire to any greater

who, from their birth or condition in life, are expected to move in the higher circles of society, and who do not feel the necessity of any exertions to secure the continued enjoyments of competency and luxury, are prepared for their future residence within the walls of the university by a laborious and expensive course of private and public instruction, adapted to their peculiar circumstances and requirements. The means at their disposal, the leisure and the time at their command, the abundant opportunities presented at every step, the vast accumulation of learning concentrated in their midst, and rendered valuable by the experience and sanction of ages,—all these form a combination of circumstances peculiarly favorable to a complete development of the mental energy. All its advantages, great as they unquestionably are, cannot, however, compensate for the deplorable inequality which is constantly felt to exist among those whom the wisdom of the Creator intended to share the same general lot. We should be content to abide the workings of time upon the conceded defects of our literary institutions, while every citizen, from the highest to the lowest, is permitted to derive such substantial benefits as they are still enabled to afford,—to suggest, and to assist in carrying into practical operation, such improvements as the intelligence of the age shall indicate,—and to unite in rearing, for the benefit of the present and of future generations, and for the admiration of the world, a system of NATIONAL EDUCATION which shall be worthy of the freedom we enjoy, and equal to our exalted position and destiny as a people. While the blessings of our common schools are diffused with a comprehensive benevolence, embracing every child of the republic in an enlightened policy, let us not reject the inestimable boon because it does not come up to an imaginary or real standard of perfection. While [redacted] academies are sending forth, an

cultivated minds to mingle with the great mass of their fellow-citizens, and to add to the pervading influence of intelligence and refinement which is rapidly extending over the land, let us not decry their value because they do not strictly conform to the models of those ancient republics or modern dynasties which we have been taught to respect and admire. Nor shall we consult the dictates of true wisdom by instituting and tracing out, with minute accuracy of detail, invidious comparisons between the higher departments of literature and science in our own happy land and those of the old world, while we can point to the cabinet and to the camp, to the senate hall and to the tribunals of justice, to the pulpit and to the bar, for the proudest and noblest illustrations of what has been already effected, under the pressure of the most discouraging circumstances, by our COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES, in the completion of that work of elementary education, the foundations of which have been generally laid in our COMMON SCHOOLS.

5. The system of COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION, as adopted and carried into execution in several of the states of the Union, if it has not fully realized the hopes and expectations of its enlightened friends, has, beyond all doubt, contributed, in an essential degree, to the intelligence and good order of the community at large. While its organization and management have materially varied in the different states, its general results have been nearly the same. Whether the system, as in Connecticut, is provided for principally from the public treasury, or, as in the other New England states, by individual taxation chiefly, or, as with us, by a judicious combination of these modes, instruction is carried, at a very cheap rate, to the doors of every citizen who feels disposed to avail himself of the advantages and blessings which it secures to his children.

Whatever defects may have been experienced in the practical operations of a plan so comprehensive and beneficial, have arisen either from its careless administration, or that culpable indifference to its improvement, which has so generally prevailed among those most deeply interested in its prosperity, and are in no degree to be attributed to a want of energy or wisdom in the system itself. To remedy these evils, it is only necessary that public sentiment should be brought to bear, with its accustomed force, upon a topic so highly important to all our future prospects as an enlightened and cultivated people.

6. Unwearied efforts have been made, so far as our own state is concerned, to bring the details of the system of common school education to the utmost attainable perfection. From the organization of our government to the present time, our highest and most distinguished public functionaries have made this subject the object of their assiduous and unremitted exertions. The interest thus manifested has resulted in the establishment of a system fully adapted to the wants and requirements of the people, worthy of the resources and enterprise of the body politic, and combining, in its prominent and essential features, the intelligence and experience of the age. A perpetual fund, from the revenues of the state, has been long consecrated exclusively to this high object, yielding an annual interest, at the present time, of about one hundred and forty thousand dollars, and securing an annual distribution to the several school districts of one hundred and ten thousand dollars, which there is no reason to apprehend will, at any future period, be diminished. The further sum of one hundred and ten thousand dollars has been appropriated to this purpose from the share of the surplus revenue of the United States deposited with this state, making in all the annual amount of two hundred and twenty thousand dollars. In ad-

dition to this amount, the several counties are required to raise, by taxation on the inhabitants of each town, a sum equal to that which is received from the public treasury. Many of the counties are also in possession of handsome local funds; so that an aggregate of upwards of five hundred thousand dollars of public money may now be annually relied upon by the common schools of the state, from the beneficent policy and judicious administration of the constituted authorities. This appropriation is required to be devoted exclusively to the payment of competent and approved teachers, and a nearly equal additional amount is now annually raised, by voluntary taxation on the part of the several districts, to be applied to the payment of teachers, besides the incidental and necessary expenses in providing buildings, furniture, and books for the school, which alone amounts to nearly half a million of dollars, and if the fees of officers connected with the administration of the system are included, greatly exceeds that sum.

7. It will be perceived from this statement, derived principally from public documents, that the enlightened liberality of the state has had, as yet, no tendency to relax the exertions or diminish the interest of those who have been the favored participants of its bounty. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that it has, thus far, imparted a stimulus and afforded an encouragement to the several districts, which might not otherwise have been attained; and that an additional incentive to individual enterprise has been derived from the cheering and animating influence which is imparted by the effective coöperation of the governmental departments. The ability and promptness evinced by the several officers to whom the administration of this excellent system is committed, in the discharge of their various and complicated duties, tend materially to promote its continued success, and to

facilitate its operations. A plan for the general diffusion of knowledge, less exceptionable in its prominent details, and more extensively beneficial in its general results, could hardly have been devised, than the one so successfully, and, we would hope, permanently adopted by the citizens of this state.

8. But it is of comparatively small importance how excellent or how admirable may be the external organization and internal details of a system of education, unless the effect which it produces upon the great mass of those for whom it is intended shall correspond, in some degree, to the high promises which its constitution indicates. The important objects intended to be accomplished should never be overlooked by those upon whose influence and exertions its prosperity and ultimate success entirely depend. The proper direction of the mind, in its earliest stages of advancement; the harmonious and gradual developement of all its powers and faculties; the enlightened culture of the moral as well as physical nature; the inculcation of fixed and elevated principles of action; in short, the completion of a solid and lasting foundation for future improvement and excellence in every situation of life,—these are the essential results, without the attainment of which nothing of permanent value can be secured from the most laborious efforts of public or private enterprise. It is in vain that the bounty of the state is poured forth with profuse and commendable liberality, that the efforts of legislators and statesmen have been judiciously directed to the maturing of an enlightened and efficient system of public instruction, that individual philanthropy and research spare no pains to combine with our own the varied excellences and improvements of foreign climes, if, with all these advantages, we continue to exhibit an indifferenee to the practical operations of those elementary institutions from whence the streams of knowledge are designed

to be diffused throughout the land. It is not enough that our youth are enabled to obtain a theoretical acquaintance with the various branches of literature and science, unless they possess the capacity and the disposition to apply them to those useful and practical purposes for which they were intended. However highly the intellectual powers may be cultivated, no sufficient guaranty can ever be afforded, in the absence of early and habitual moral impressions and principles, that they will not be miserably perverted, and, instead of a blessing, prove a curse to their possessor and to mankind. The claims of society, the great interests of humanity, the obligations of true patriotism, and the happiness and welfare of individuals, all concur in presenting the highest inducements to render the work of education, what it is capable of becoming, and what it should be, the moral and intellectual renovator of our race.

9. The progress of the age, in all those great improvements which have a tendency to promote the advance of civilization and refinement, indicates the continued march of mind. A practical reform in the administration of our primary schools, effected by the awakened and wholesome influence of public opinion, will tend, more than any thing else, to elevate the moral enterprise of the present day far above its present standard. This undertaking may not present itself in the attractive and alluring guise which belongs to many of those noble and enlightened projects which have enlisted the energies and drawn forth the resources of the learned, the great, and the good. It may be unostentatious in its pretensions, and unambitious in its character; it may not call to its aid the ordinary interests, or the prevailing passions of the multitude; it may not possess the power to rally around itself that enthusiastic and ardent feeling which characterizes many of the pursuits of philanthropy and benevolence.

Its ultimate aim, nevertheless, is more lofty, its hopes and its prospects more enlivening and animating, its destiny more sacred, and its aspirations more generous and ennobling. Without its promised benefit we can derive no permanent and substantial improvement from the inventive capacity of genius; deprived of its essential aid, all the blessings of social and active life will insensibly languish and decay. Comprehending, as it does, in its enlarged views, all that the present has of usefulness and enjoyment, and all that the future presents of anticipation and hope, the time cannot be distant when its importance shall be fully realized, and its high claims universally and practically acknowledged.

10. One of the most serious defects in the practical operations of the common school system, as it has hitherto been administered, is the want of competent and experienced teachers. There are, doubtless, in every community, individuals combining a sufficiently high order of talents and qualifications; but a false idea of economy, and an unjustifiable spirit of parsimony, seem so generally to have prevailed in our school districts, that the services of such men cannot be procured for the miserable compensation ordinarily afforded to teachers. The early education of our youth is, consequently, in too many instances, committed to the care of the inexperienced, the inefficient, and the ignorant, those who resort to instruction as a temporary expedient, and who feel no interest beyond that of the moment, in the welfare, progress, or improvement of their charge. When we take into consideration the immense importance of first impressions on the human mind, the influence uniformly exerted by early associations, the habits established, and the principles inculcated, upon which the whole of future life is to be modelled, we cannot but be surprised at the criminal apathy and indifference so frequently

manifested towards our elementary institutions of learning. That the happiness or misery, the intelligence or ignorance, the virtue or the vice, of those who look to us for the direction which their existence is to assume in all coming time, should be made to depend upon mere questions of pecuniary interest, is a proposition which cannot fail to alarm the conscience and awaken the sober conviction of every reflecting being. Such a result, however, it is to be apprehended, must necessarily follow from a continuance in the present system of furnishing our schools with *cheap teachers*. If we would command the services of men of cultivated intellect, sound and established moral principles, and liberal and enlarged views, we must present to them the ordinary inducements for ambitious and energetic action; we must elevate the profession and business of an instructor to the grade of other honorable and lucrative occupations; we must encourage a noble and well-directed competition; and, more than all, we must build up and sustain institutions expressly devoted to the preparation of teachers. Conventions and associations of the friends of education have already effected much good by the direct and systematic influence which they have exerted upon public opinion in this and other important respects; and no more beneficial measure could be adopted, if it were deemed practicable, than to procure, by means of such associations or otherwise, a general determination, on the part of the school districts, to require, in all cases, the highest attainable qualifications in teachers, and to reward their exercise in such a manner as to secure an increase of talent and capacity in this department. Upon this subject there should be neither hesitation nor delay. Economy can be consulted to a much greater degree, and in a much more effectual manner, in this mode, than in the one which now prevails to an extent so alarming. The money expended, and the time de-

voted, under the system heretofore adopted, is worse than lost. When the celebrated founder of Pennsylvania left his native land for the great enterprise which has conferred immortality upon his name, among a variety of economical directions which he wished his family to observe during his absence, he impressively adds, in behalf of his children, "Let their learning be liberal; spare no cost, *for by such parsimony all is lost that is saved.*" This noble sentiment is worthy of being perpetuated in letters of gold, for the admiration and instruction of every citizen of the republic. It imbodies a principle which cannot be too solemnly inculcated upon the hearts and minds of the American people throughout all future generations.

11. Another essential requisite to the efficiency and prosperity of our common school system is, that a deeper and more extended interest should be felt in their operations and welfare than has heretofore existed. Strange as it may seem, the fact is nevertheless indisputable, that, in a great majority of instances, parents seldom either visit or inquire into the condition, prospects, or success of the school at which their children pass so great a portion of their time, and where they are expected to lay the foundation for their education and their future character in life. If the teacher spends the usual number of hours in the day, and fulfils the contract he has entered into with the district, in the ordinary manner, nothing more is required at his hands; and whether the minds of those whom he has undertaken to enlighten remain stationary, advance, or recede, seems practically a matter of but little moment. While this indifference prevails among parents, can it be expected that any good results should manifest themselves in the primary schools? The strongest incentive which can be held out to a deserving teacher—the hope of securing the approbation of those for whom he labors, by the fidelity and ability with

which his duties are performed—is entirely wanting; and unless his benevolence and philanthropy greatly exceed those of ordinary men, he will relapse into that state of carelessness and indifference to the business he is engaged in, so fatal to its usefulness and success. It has been observed, that this culpable feeling is seldom manifested with reference to the external arrangements and internal polity of the districts themselves. These minor subjects enlist the energies, and not unfrequently excite the sensibilities, of those concerned, in a very high degree. The limits and the form of the territorial organization, the location of the school-house, the divisions and annexations which may from time to time become necessary and proper, the assessment and collection of taxes, the choice of officers, and a variety of incidental topics, are discussed with an earnestness, and occasionally with an acerbity of feeling, indicating the strongest interest in the result. All this is commendable and praiseworthy, where it does not degenerate into unprofitable collisions and unpleasant feuds; and no one can regret that these departments of the district school should be vigilantly guarded, and its welfare thus far, at least, promoted. But of how much greater importance is it, that the fundamental objects of the system should be secured in the dissemination of intelligence and the blessings of virtue, good order, and social improvement! "These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone."

12. The *mode of instruction* which has heretofore prevailed in our common schools has, beyond all doubt, been very objectionable, both in its *matter* and its *manner*. The branches taught have seldom been such as were adapted to the immature comprehension of the learner, at the period when they were required to be taken up, or which were calculated to prove extensively and practically beneficial at any future time.

Instruction has been communicated, too frequently, in such a manner as to produce an invincible repugnance in the mind for which it was intended, which could not prove otherwise than fatal to any subsequent interest or improvement. The intelligence of the present day has, it is believed, placed this branch of the subject before the public mind in such a light as to produce a strong conviction of the utter absurdity and inutility of the prevailing system, as well as its deleterious effects upon the mental, moral, and physical capacities of our youth. The method of education, now gradually gaining an ascendency in our best institutions, has received the sanction of the learned and experienced on the other side of the Atlantic, and commends itself to the judgment and intelligence of all who have examined and tested its intrinsic merit. Its distinguishing excellence consists in the harmonious developement of the various faculties of our nature, so as to produce the greatest possible improvement in the most simple and attractive manner—adopting, without prejudice or reserve, all the suggestions which enlightened observation and experience can furnish, and rejecting, with firmness and decision, every thing calculated to retard the progress, obstruct the intellect, or detract from the interest of the student. The complete substitution of this method, with its long train of substantial improvements, for the radical deficiencies and gross errors of the antiquated system, will be recognized as the introduction of a new era in the history of education.

13. It has long been apparent to every attentive observer, and is conceded, on all hands, that the *standard* and prevailing *modes* of education, as they have heretofore existed among us, are unsuited to the spirit of the age and the requirements of the human intellect. The *quantity* of knowledge, instead of its *quality*, has been too generally regarded in all our systems of instruction; and we are preparing for future action in

life vast numbers of individuals, whose attainments, although perhaps sufficiently general and extensive, must necessarily be superficial. This state of things has its origin as well in the want of interest, so alarmingly apparent in the public mind with reference to this subject, as in causes more immediately connected with the administration of our institutions of learning. The absence of an efficient and well-qualified body of teachers, prepared to devote their time and talents to the energetic prosecution of an adequate and thorough course of mental, moral, and physical preparation, forms a serious obstacle to a complete reformation in the present defective methods of elementary instruction. Efforts have recently been made on the part of the legislature of our own state, ably seconded by the regents of the university and the principals of several of our academies, to establish and maintain seminaries for the education of teachers, upon the principles of the normal schools in various parts of Europe. Could we indulge the hope that this system could be effectually carried out, in accordance with the design and intentions of its enlightened founders and patrons, no greater or more valuable service could be afforded to the cause of education. But while so little encouragement is held out to the ambition of those who are disposed to avail themselves of its advantages in a manner calculated to fit them for lasting usefulness, it can hardly be expected that the comprehensive views of the legislature will immediately be realized. There are so many fields of labor around us, more inviting, more profitable, and more permanent, that it requires a more disinterested effort than we can hope to witness in this material age, to sacrifice present comfort and future prospects to the doubtful allurements and rewards of philanthropic exertion. All must lament the prevalence of a spirit so repugnant to the genius of our institutions, and so paralyzing to the onward

progress of light and knowledge, and we cannot permit ourselves to doubt that it will ultimately give place to a higher and nobler feeling. Entertaining these views, we are accustomed to regard every indication of a better and more exalted tone of public sentiment as favorable to the final triumph of correct principles in this respect, and to look forward, with unabated confidence, to the period when teachers of youth, qualified for their deeply responsible vocation by years of practical study and observation, shall assume an equal station with those who are engaged in the most respectable as well as lucrative employments of our country. In the mean time, our seminaries of preparation will have attained strength and durability, under the direction of experienced and efficient instructors, and will gradually and steadily commend themselves to the best wishes of an intelligent population.

14. To those who appreciate the immense importance of a proper cultivation of the mind, and its influence upon the destiny of individuals and the welfare of society, it is lamentable to witness the waste of time and the perversion of power, which are the necessary results of careless and defective methods of instruction. These evils exist among us to a degree which attentive observation alone can fully estimate. In a very large proportion of common schools the moral culture of the young is, to say the least, entirely neglected, and those principles of action upon which the tendency of future life wholly depends are permitted to mature and expand, as the varying circumstances of the hour may dictate. The accumulation of knowledge, in a confused, superficial, and often a forced manner, is the result, perhaps, of years of wretched discipline, under the most various, absurd, and contradictory systems. The powers of the memory are overtasked and abused, while the perceptive faculties remain unenlightened, and the reasoning, judging, and discriminating capaci-

ties unaffected. An early and insuperable aversion to the pursuits of science is contracted by the forbidding appearances they are made to assume. The mind, naturally eager for information, and disposed to the acquisition of new ideas, finds itself repulsed, in its first stages, by the necessity of conforming to arbitrary standards and incomprehensible requirements. Its capabilities are crushed in the bud, its self-confidence destroyed, its ambition checked, and its progress to maturity fatally retarded. All its subsequent advances must necessarily partake of the weakness and debility which have thus prematurely contracted its faculties and prevented the full and harmonious developement of its powers.

15. The valuable improvements adopted by the enlightened and benevolent founders of the German, Swiss, and Prussian schools, have already exerted a vast influence on the system of elementary instruction, both in this country and Europe. Rejecting, altogether, the absurd and impracticable views which had obtained so wide a predominance, these practical and independent reformers have undertaken to guide the mind from its earliest expansion to its more substantial and lasting attainments, by assisting it in perceiving and understanding its own powers, and in availing itself with the greatest facility of its own wonderful and diversified resources. It is not left to waste its active energies in unprofitable idleness and vacuity during those intervals in which it is unengaged in the prosecution of its literary and scientific researches. It attains, early, and without sensible effort, the habit of perceiving, analyzing, and comprehending the visible objects of the material universe, and of applying the principles thus agreeably and naturally imbibed to their proper uses in life. The foundation being thus broadly and permanently laid, the superstructure is made to exhibit its easy and graceful proportions, by

an assiduous cultivation of the mental powers, having a due regard to the equal predominance of each, by implanting and constantly cherishing fixed and stable principles of virtue and Christian morality, and by a wise supervision and judicious discipline of the physical faculties of our common nature. In this manner the students of those institutions pass their cheerful spring-time of existence, in thoroughly preparing themselves for a rich harvest of usefulness, happiness, and extended benevolence. Their acquisitions are solid, substantial, and permanent; their capabilities for whatever destination futurity may have in store for them are abundantly secured; and when they emerge into the scenes of active life they are effectually protected, so far as human efforts can protect them, against its insidious temptations and lurking snares. They are prepared to exert an influence among their fellow-men which shall be widely and beneficially felt, to infuse into the bosom of society a new and creative energy, dissipate the thick clouds of ignorance and superstition, check the predominance of guilty passions, and elevate the pursuits and objects of all around them. In their turn, they give the bias of their own minds, and the results of their enlightened researches, to a new generation, and are thus instrumental, in an eminent degree, in renovating and purifying the sources of public opinion, correcting public and private morals, lessening the amount of vice and misery, and contributing to the cup of human enjoyment.

16. From the official returns made to the superintendent of common schools of this state, it appears that, out of about six hundred and fifty thousand children, between the ages of five and sixteen years, residing in the state, upwards of six hundred thousand, or twelve out of every thirteen, are under instruction in the common schools. Of the remaining fifty thousand, ten thousand are engaged in academical studies,

and the residue are either educated in private and select schools, or are entirely destitute of instruction. From the statements of a distinguished friend of education, recently made to the public, derived from long and accurate personal investigation, nineteen out of twenty of all the children in the Union are instructed in the common schools. It is in the common schools, then, that the great mass of those who are soon to direct the interests and guide the destinies of our great and growing republic, receive those cardinal and elementary lessons of mental and moral training which are to shape and govern their lives, form the basis of their individual, social, political, and religious character, mould their institutions, and direct their energies. What a trust is here confided to those who have the immediate supervision of these institutions! How momentous and solemn the responsibility, devolved upon parents, upon officers of school districts, upon all directly or remotely connected with a system involving such vast results, and especially upon teachers! Let us briefly consider its extent and importance.

17. And, first, what is the nature and extent of the education which the enlightened dictates of religious and moral duty, the aspects and civilization of the age, and the character of our institutions, require at our hands? Clear, consistent, and accurate views on this head are indispensable to a comprehensive and practical system of public instruction; and it is to the absence or neglect of such views that we may trace the wide and powerful dominion of ignorance and error, even while surrounded by intelligence and civilization. An ignorance of the fundamental faculties of the mind,—their various powers and susceptibilities,—their modes of action, separately, and in their infinitely diversified combinations,—the influences, external and internal, which affect them,—and the innumerable elements which, often imperceptibly, enter

into and gradually constitute the character,—a failure duly to appreciate and rightly to comprehend the cardinal virtues of humanity,—the obligations of conscience and of duty, and the supremacy of the moral nature,—a mistaken conception of the spirit of the age, and the demands of the times,—and a perverted view of the peculiar institutions and form of government under which it is our happiness to live,—all and each of these exert a powerful influence in giving, early, a false but irrevocable direction to the plastic and expanding mind of youth, and are fraught with consequences which, were we able to trace them to their legitimate results, we should indeed tremble to contemplate. The teacher, to whose care we commit the instruction of our children, is thereby vested with a power second, in importance and extent, to none bestowed upon the human race—the power, namely, to develope, mould, and direct the limitless energies of the immortal mind; to lay the foundations of a life of happiness or misery to be enjoyed or suffered by those who, in their innocence and confiding helplessness, await his lessons; to form the future characters of those who, in a few short years, are to step forth upon the broad arena of the world, and mingle their destinies, for good or for evil, with that of their kind. It is his duty systematically and thoroughly to prepare himself, both intellectually and morally, for the due discharge of these high responsibilities, and to enter upon the performance of his great task, deeply impressed with a conviction of its importance, and resolutely determined to fulfil its obligations conscientiously, and to the extent of his abilities. Above all, he should be penetrated with a profound reverence and abiding love for humanity, as such, that he may be prepared to do justice to each individual committed to his charge; to apprehend and appreciate the various shades of character spread out before him; accurately

to estimate (so to speak) the length, breadth, and depth of the mental and moral faculties of each of his pupils, and intelligently to develope the powers of the mind in harmonious accordance with its whole nature and constitution.

18. These requirements undoubtedly involve capacities and gifts rarely to be found in the present state of knowledge, and demand minds deeply imbued with philosophy, thoroughly trained and disciplined, and capable of communicating the results of that discipline, in an intelligible manner, to others. It is, moreover, true that the proportion of such minds, devoted to the task of elementary instruction in our common schools, is lamentably small, in comparison with those of a less elevated and comprehensive character. But all excellence is progressive; and we are called upon, by every consideration of duty and usefulness to the rising generation, to fix upon a standard to which the ambition and exertions of those who would prepare themselves for the high calling of teachers of youth in our elementary institutions may be directed. This can be effectually accomplished only by an enlightened public sentiment; and to secure the energetic coöperation of the great mass of our fellow-citizens in an object so noble, it can only be necessary to present to them, in a clear and intelligible manner, its paramount and vital importance to all their springs of happiness, and of individual and social well-being.

19. The great end and aim of all education should be to confer upon the pupil an enlightened knowledge of the fundamental laws and constitution of his nature, and a clear perception of his duties and obligations as an intelligent, moral, and social being. He should be made to comprehend, so far as it is possible for him to do so, his wonderful and mysterious existence; the great purposes for which he was created; the high

duties and responsibilities devolved upon him; the various physical and mental faculties which he possesses; their adaptation to each other, and to the external world of matter as well as mind; their limitations and restrictions; their capacities for action and enjoyment; the consequences resulting from their proper and harmonious action, in the elevation, expansion, and happiness of his nature; and the inevitable retributions and sufferings flowing from the discordant play of the passions and the violation of the laws of his being. He should early be taught to recognize the supremacy of the moral sentiments, the dictates of duty, the voice of God within his soul; and that he may rightly understand and intelligently interpret the will of his Creator, his intellect must be stored with the rich treasures of knowledge; his perceptions of truth rendered clear and undisturbed; his faculties of analysis, discrimination, comparison, and reason, kept in constant, regular, and healthy exercise; and every admixture of error carefully removed. He must be taught to regard himself as a portion of the community in which he resides, bound to consult its paramount interests, to obey cheerfully all its laws, and conform to its institutions, in so far as they do not clearly subvert the obligations of duty and of conscience; to carry forward its civilization, promote its welfare and prosperity, and contribute to the happiness and well-being of its citizens. His intellectual and moral faculties must be so cultivated and developed as to enable him, in the right exercise of his judgment and discrimination, to arrive at just conclusions upon the various questions of individual, social, or public concernment, in relation to which he may be called to act. In his researches into the history of the past, as well as in his investigations of the varying phenomena and results of science and the arts; in his study of the universe, as well of matter as of mind,—he should be

enabled to proceed upon enlarged and comprehensive principles, to separate the essential and the permanent from the transitory and the accidental, and to deduce those conclusions which alone can strengthen and invigorate the intellectual powers, and carry forward the whole mind in its pursuit of truth.

20. Let the teacher, then, ponder well the deep responsibilities which his office involves. Let him reflect that to him is committed the direction, in a great degree, of the future destinies of immortal beings, fresh from the hands of their Creator, and entering upon a career of existence which is to know no termination. Above all, let him be deeply and seriously impressed with the reflection that, during the rapidly-fleeting years of childhood, the great work of education is going on with an impulse which cannot be restrained; that, while the body is progressing to maturity, the intellectual and moral faculties are constantly participating in all the influences daily and hourly presented by the external world; that the wonderful elements of mind are incessantly engaged in the solution of the great problem of existence; and that, with or without the instruction which it is his duty to communicate, results of infinite moment to the future welfare and prosperity of the beings confided to his care will be attained.

21. It is to the elevation of the character and qualification of the teachers of our common schools that we are to look for the substantial and permanent advancement of the interests of education. In the actual condition and present aspect of our free institutions, all other means will be found of secondary importance. To this object, then, let our chief exertions be directed, in full confidence that public sentiment will abundantly sustain, nay, imperatively demand, the universal diffusion of a system of public instruction emanating from and under the immediate and constant [illegible]vision of the highest minds of the [illegible] business

of instruction is of too great importance—is too deeply and intimately connected with the highest interests of the race—too closely allied to civilization—to the diffusion and enlightened appreciation of Christianity—to the progressive advancement and ultimate perfection of our nature—to be confided to ignorant or unskilful hands.

22. Systems of education will be found almost invariably to partake of the character and spirit of the age by which they are adopted, and to be bounded by its general attainments. Public opinion, here, as on every other subject, exerts a predominating influence. It is impossible for men to teach what they do not themselves possess; although they may assist in the proper developement of powers which may enable the learner to extend his researches far beyond those of the instructor. The work of education may therefore be properly conducted without direct reference to its ultimate results, provided the instructor is capable of communicating to the pupil an adequate knowledge of his own powers, and of the materials in the physical and moral world upon which they may act, and by which they may be influenced; and provided, also, he gives a right direction to the moral and intellectual faculties. The details of science may, under such circumstances, safely be left to be mastered as inclination and opportunity may arise. There is little danger that such as are necessary will be neglected; while much valuable time might be saved which would otherwise be unprofitably spent in the acquisition of branches which, however adapted to minds differently organized, can neither be adequately appreciated or beneficially employed by those for whose benefit they are specially intended.

23. The first great element of education is a thorough observation of the material world around us, in all its varied aspects. This the infant mind com-

mences upon its first consciousness of life, and continues with constantly increasing interest and pleasure, until its faculties are sufficiently strengthened to enable it to reason and compare, and to look in upon itself. At this period, the most important in its results upon the future, moral impressions begin to be made; at first feeble and faint, but gradually more and more permanent and durable, taking their hues from surrounding circumstances and associations, and imprinting themselves with an almost indelible distinctness upon the mind. It is to be feared that parents and teachers do not sufficiently appreciate the immense interests which their children have at stake at this critical period of their lives. Keenly susceptible of every passing breath of influence; open to the reception of every precept and every principle which may be inculcated; alive to the force of every example which is presented to their consideration; and rapidly assimilating their feelings, habits, and impulses to those with which they are brought into contact,—their characters are insensibly formed, and the long and interminable vista of the future moulded at the will and pleasure of those who direct the early developement of their powers. What a responsibility is here! And what are the requisites to its faithful and conscientious discharge? The suppression of every improper passion; the assiduous cultivation of every virtue; the daily practice of every known duty; the frequent exhibition of all that is beautiful in religion and morality; charity and forgiveness for the erring; simplicity and humility in all the details of life; and a proper appreciation of the busy world around us, of the shifting scenes of light and shade which alternate as we pass through it, and of all the interests which spring up and disappear in its rapid progress. In other words, the education which it becomes our duty, under the sanction of the fearful responsibility, to bestow upon those who

us for the direction of their future lives, and who come to us in all the sinless purity and angelic innocence of their nature, to learn their destiny, we cannot adequately bestow, until we have first thoroughly purified and renovated our own hearts and natures, and purged from them the dross which the contaminations of the world have engendered. And herein are we not doubly blessed, both in giving and receiving? How beautiful is that adaptation of Providence, which appeals to one of the strongest and most universal principles of our nature—the deep interest which the parent feels for the future happiness and welfare of his child,—to secure for him that discipline of the whole mind which shall fit him for the proper discharge of all the duties of life, and for the high and holy enjoyments of which that mind is susceptible; and, at the same time, converts the exercise of that very discipline into the means of elevating and purifying the hearts of those from whom it is required! And how accumulated the responsibility of those whom such an inducement fails to reach; who, engrossed with the business and cares, the frivolities and passions, of life, suffer the stifling weeds of vice and ignorance to choke the narrow path of virtue, and leave their offspring to wander among the crowded thoroughfares which lead to degradation, wretchedness, and misery!

24. It must always be borne in mind that no education is worthy of the name which does not, at the earliest practicable period, confer upon the pupil the power of SELF-CULTURE; which does not fully apprize him of the capacities and destination of his intellectual and moral nature, and enable him to develope his various faculties in harmony with the constitution of his being, and in subserviency to the great end for which he was created. One of the chief distinctive features of humanity, as has heretofore been observed, is individual responsibility, and its prominent charac-

teristic, the capacity for indefinite progression. "No man liveth to himself alone,"—and, in the exercise of the daily and hourly duties of life, the interests and well-being of others are, to a greater or less extent, involved. The progress of civilization has immeasurably enlarged the sphere of individual exertion, and opened a corresponding field of mental advancement. By repressing the more violent passions, the nobler sentiments of humanity have been permitted to expand, and the intellectual powers have been directed to the accomplishment of higher and purer objects. The mind has been gradually thrown more and more upon its own intrinsic resources; and that ambition, which for a long series of centuries has striven for the attainment of external power, wealth, station, and influence, at whatever cost, now discovers an ample and glorious field for its highest aspirations, in the legitimate exercise of those intellectual and moral faculties of its being, by which it can secure the richest treasures of the universe, and look forward to an inexhaustible field of pleasurable exertion constantly expanding before it. The mind, properly disciplined and directed, need never go beyond itself for the materials of greatness, power, and enjoyment. It has but to appreciate its own capacities, and explore and develope its own resources, to find its appropriate field of exertion. It has but to become fully sensible of its own innate dignity and worth, its derivation from the great source of all excellence and perfection, its superiority to the material world by which it is surrounded, and its tendency to advancement, to shake off the inglorious bondage by which it is rendered subservient to the "beggarly elements" of time and sense, and to press onward to that perfection which is constantly presented to its view in the exalted attributes of its being. In the discharge of the daily and hourly duties of life, in acts of be-

neficence and kindness, in social intercourse, in public or private employment, in the cultivation and discipline of its own powers, and in the diffusion and extension of knowledge and virtue, consists its true greatness—its lasting enjoyment. This is the end of all education; and it can be accomplished only by and through self-culture.

25. The teacher, therefore, who has communicated to his pupils the power of self-culture, together with an enlightened knowledge of the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of their being; who has eradicated the vicious propensities of their nature, or rendered them subordinate to the eternal principles of duty, and directed the expanding faculties of the mind to their legitimate field of action,—has discharged his whole duty; has added to the stock of human virtue and human happiness; has enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, widened the sphere of civilization, and elevated the standard of human nature. If he has failed to do this, his ministry cannot have been other than a disastrous one. If he has educated the intellect merely,—if he has permitted the precocious weeds of vice to spring up and flourish unchecked, the feeble and stinted growth of true knowledge in a soil thus exhausted of its strength by the nourishment it has afforded to the poisonous plants which desolate its surface will soon be stifled; while the passions will have been furnished with inexhaustible means of perpetuating their fearful ascendancy and extending their iron dominion. Better, far better, that the mind should remain in the deepest darkness of ignorance, than that the lights of science should shine upon it, only to nourish and invigorate the noxious plants of vice and crime.

26. It may with safety be said that a well-regulated and well-directed PUBLIC OPINION is a more efficient

agent in the work of education than all the systems of instruction which have been or can be devised. If the prevailing tendency of the age, and of the community in which we live, be favorable to a progressive advancement in wisdom, and virtue, and knowledge, as the basis of the only sound philosophy of human life —as worthy of a general concentration of all its interests, passions, and feelings,—the mind and the heart will involuntarily take that direction; the moral powers will assume their proper preponderance; and all the various faculties of our nature will harmoniously coöperate in their respective spheres. If, on the other hand, the attainment of wealth, the pursuit of pleasure, the struggle for power, for distinction, and for worldly applause, are found to be the principal objects of ambition, and to engross the energies of the mass of mankind,—the most perfect system of education will fail in accomplishing any permanent results, or in securing any general adoption. It is in vain to impress upon the mind, amid the associations of youth, innocence, and happiness, the purest doctrines of the most sound and elevated philosophy, if, when the hallowed sanctuary of home is overpassed, and the delightful groves of the academy left behind, the sober realities of life are discovered to be a compound of interested selfishness, unworthy aspirations, and unchastened ambition, while nobler views, nobler efforts, and a more exalted benevolence, seldom find a congenial soil, where they may bud, blossom, and expand. It is in vain to expatiate upon the beauty and sublimity of moral excellence, while the world's ready and unbounded applause awaits the successful results of bold effrontery, low duplicity, persevering cunning, and well-dissembled craft. The highest order of intellect, even when combined with the sternest moral and religious principles, can rarely mingle with the base elements of the busy

world, and escape the deep contamination of the contact.

27. There are few circumstances or conditions in life, in which we can render ourselves to any extent practically independent of the powerful influences which the opinion of those around us, and of the public at large, exert upon our conduct. There is a principle deeply implanted in our nature, which compels us to regulate even our most trivial actions, and gradually to form our character, and mould our sentiments, by the standard which prevails in the community to which we belong. History affords ample evidence of the presence and the effects of this all-pervading power; and hence the formidable obstacles which have, in all ages, been interposed to the progress of those great reforms in religion, in political economy, and moral philosophy, as well as in scientific knowledge, which from time to time have agitated and disturbed society. The minds and actions of men so insensibly assimilate to each other, and so imperceptibly is the power of public opinion concentrated around the established institutions, modes of thinking, and ordinary pursuits, that the slightest innovation upon the magic circle drawn by habit, by custom, and by association, excites at once the astonishment and indignation of all, and places the daring offender beyond the pale of pardon. It is needless to adduce instances, abounding in the annals of our race, of the melancholy effects of this potent influence. All of elevation to which the morals, the intellect, and the refinement of the present age has attained, has been imparted to it by the slow and painful developement of principles promulgated in the face of danger, and often of death, and maintained in the midst of a fiery struggle against principalities and powers, and a world in arms, madly bent upon the overthrow of champions, of whom, indeed, it was not

worthy. We are accustomed to flatter ourselves, in these days of greater enlightenment, that a more correct appreciation of the great truths of the moral and physical world, place us at an immeasurable distance from the erroneous influences of those ages of darkness and gloom. Thanks to the expanding spirit of a progressive civilization, this proud boast is, to a great extent, borne out by the evidence of facts. Under the peculiar and inestimable institutions of our own favored land, the intellect and the heart are indeed left free to accomplish their brightest and noblest conceptions, without the apprehension of physical restraint. But these institutions, while they have wisely interposed the most efficient checks to the introduction of a persecuting and an intolerant spirit, have, at the same time, conferred an overwhelming power upon public opinion. Before that power the highest and the lowest are compelled, by a moral force which it is in vain to withstand, to bow, with an implicit deference.

28. The most formidable obstacle to the general diffusion of knowledge, by means of a sound and effectual system of public instruction, exists, it is to be apprehended, in the indifference of the great body of the people to this subject, when compared with the other important undertakings of the age. The wisdom of our ancestors has, it is true, transmitted to us the firm foundations of national wealth and prosperity, in the admirable institutions under which we live; but it remains for us to erect upon this substantial base a superstructure against which the winds and the waves of time shall have no power. The acquisition of national and individual riches will not secure us against the fatal inroads of corruption and effeminate luxury; nor will the splendid monuments of inventive genius, or the daring efforts of unbounded enterprise, prevent the corroding progress of licentiousness and vice. Those immense combinations of physical and

mental power, which, in so short a period, have converted the pathless wilderness of our western world into the magnificent and flourishing abodes of civilization and refinement, are justly subjects of admiration and astonishment. They have opened new and interminable sources of wealth, and developed the wonderful resources of an unfettered nation of freemen. The continued exertion of the intellectual strength which has been in this manner put forth, and its direction into the great channels of mental and moral improvement, would advance us, with inconceivable rapidity, to the summit of attainable excellence in all that constitutes the enduring glory of a people.

29. It is, however, too true, that our exertions and our ambition have been circumscribed, in a great degree, within the boundaries of our immediate or remote interest, in a pecuniary view. The spirit of gain has obtained too strong an ascendancy over us. The tendency of this state of things, if persisted in, however we may deceive ourselves by present and flattering appearances, is inevitably downward. Public sentiment, unless it assumes a higher direction, will become auxiliary to the ultimate destruction of all those redeeming virtues which sustain and keep alive the fabric of our republican institutions. While the powerful energies of our combined strength are exhausted in the every-day pursuits of active life, and in the struggle for wealth and its attendant advantages, the cultivation of the mind is necessarily neglected, the moral and social virtues fall into disrepute, the bonds which unite us as intellectual and accountable beings are weakened, the harmonious action of the body politic is deranged, and the chief blessings of life are sacrificed on the altars erected to individual avarice and grasping gain. We may boast of our institutions of learning, of the liberal policy adopted by our governments, of the perfection to which we have carried the

details of our systems of instruction, of the sums which we annually expend in their support, and of the interest taken in their welfare by the great and the good in every part of our land; unless we can enlist the full and effective coöperation of public sentiment to carry forward and expand the great work which has been commenced, unless we can transfer to this vast field of labor the resistless energies and indomitable spirit which have effected so much in other departments of enterprise, we cannot hope to extend the sphere of human intellect, to enlarge the boundaries of human ambition, to elevate the understanding, better the heart, and amend the life. There is enough of benevolence and of philanthropy in our land. The calls of charity, from the remotest corners of the globe, have been heard and answered; the appeals of patriotism have not been sounded in insensible ears; the demands of the Christian religion have been responded to, wherever they have been proclaimed; the sufferings, the errors, and even the crimes of humanity, have enlisted the feelings and called forth the efforts of thousands to their relief. Whence is it, then, that the early cultivation of the intellectual and moral powers should excite an interest comparatively so feeble; that the progress of education should be watched with an indifference so alarming; that every effort to elevate the standard of reform, in this respect, should be paralyzed by the want of that sustaining and invigorating influence which can alone accomplish great results?

30. We appeal, then, in behalf of the cause of education, to every individual of our flourishing and happy land, who feels an interest in its continued prosperity, who would promote its substantial greatness, who would preserve its noble institutions, and transmit its blessings, unimpaired, to future generations. We invoke the active, energetic, and spirited exertions of the friends of the human race, wherever they are to

be found; of those who rightly appreciate the influence of intellectual supremacy, who would enlarge the borders of reason, and extend its sway over the material universe. We would enlist the strongest and best feelings of the parent, the comprehensive benevolence of the philanthropist, the proud ambition of the patriot, the devoted energy of the statesman, and the most sincere ardor of the Christian, in an undertaking which promises to multiply the blessings of the social and domestic circle, widen the sphere of charity, cement the strong foundations of government, strengthen the bonds of our beloved Union, and promote the present and future happiness of mankind. While we cheerfully and gratefully concede the value of what has already been effected in our own and in foreign climes, we would not stop here; we would transfer the burden, which has been so nobly assumed and borne by the few, to the shoulders of the many. Where the highest and deepest interests of all are concerned, it is essential that every one should fully and clearly appreciate the nature and extent of the duty required at his hands. To drag out a few painful and unprofitable years of existence in a world crowded with misery is but a poor boon. To enjoy the luxuries of life, and to revel in the wealth which is always at the command of him who devotes to its acquisition his energies and his powers, can afford but an empty satisfaction to one who duly reflects on the instability of fortune and the vicissitudes of time. But to live for the benefit of the human race; to be instrumental in adding to the cup of human happiness, in diminishing the amount of human wretchedness, in diffusing the beneficial influences of a sound and pure morality, in contributing to the stock of valuable knowledge, in bringing it home to thousands who would otherwise never have participated in its blessings, and in elevating the affections, strengthening the virtue, and refining the character of

of our fellow-beings,—this is an ambition worthy of our high nature. The proudest monuments of enterprise and the most finished specimens of the arts cannot entitle their projectors and authors to the high meed of commendation which those deserve who are thus prepared to overlook the perishable enjoyments which surround them for the nobler and imperishable fruits of a comprehensive and enlightened benevolence. The age in which we live, with all its vast and gigantic undertakings, if destined to survive in the remembrance of posterity to all coming time, must be distinguished, not for the influence which it has exerted on material substances alone, or chiefly, but for that which has been brought to bear on intellect, on morals, on refinement, and civilization. The part we are to act in determining this character rests with ourselves—its consequences with posterity. The responsibility is a fearful one; may it be nobly, conscientiously, and efficiently met!

## CHAPTER IX.

## COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

[The following REPORT on the subject of COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES was prepared during the last fall, in pursuance of the special direction of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, by HENRY S. RANDALL, Esq. Superintendent of Common Schools of Cortland County. Deeming it an able and satisfactory exposition of the great subject which it discusses, the Author of the present work applied for and readily obtained permission to insert this Report, as the concluding chapter of the present work. The subject is one which commends itself to the best regards of every enlightened friend of Popular Education; and the views contained in the Report cannot fail of proving acceptable to those who feel an interest in the proper and judicious disposition of the liberal fund annually appropriated by the State to the diffusion of Useful Knowledge, through the medium of the eleven thousand District Libraries, scattered over its surface. If, by the publication of this report in the present work, the Author can succeed in giving to it a more general circulation than it would probably receive as an appendage to a legislative document, he will consider himself as having rendered an essential service to the interests of elementary education in this respect.

It is proper also to add, that the views contained in the report, and the principles laid down with reference to the

proper selection of books for the several District Libraries, are fully endorsed and approved by the State Superintendent of Common Schools in his last annual report to the Legislature.]

THE page of history furnishes few examples where a government has as well subserved the just and paternal ends of its creation, as did the State of New-York, in providing that libraries of sound and useful literature should be placed within the reach of all her inhabitants, and rendered accessible to them without charge. This philanthropic and admirably conceived measure may be justly regarded as, next to the institution of common schools, the most important in that series of causes, which will give its distinctive character to our civilization as a people. The civilizations of ancient and modern times present a marked distinction. While the former shot forth at different epochs, with an intense brilliancy, it was confined to the few ; and the fame of those few has descended to us, like the light of occasional solitary stars, shining forth from surrounding darkness. The ancient libraries, though rich in their stores and vast in extent, diffused their benefits with equal exclusiveness. The Egyptian peasant who cultivated the plains of the Nile, or the artizan who wrought in her princely cities, was made neither wiser nor better by the locked up treasures of the Alexandrian ; and though the Grecian, Roman, and even Persian commanders plundered hostile nations of their books, no portion of their priceless wealth entered the abodes of common humanity, to diffuse intelligence and joy.

The art of printing first began to popularize civilization. To make it universal, however, it was necessary that all should be taught to read. The Common School supplies this link in the chain of agencies. But another was yet wanting. Not only must man be taught to read, but that mental aliment to which reading merely gives access, must be brought within his reach ; and it is surely as wise and philanthropic, indeed as necessary, on the part of government, to supply such moral and intellectual food, as to give the means of partaking of it, and an appetite for its enjoyment. Without the last boon, the first would be, in the case of the masses, comparatively useless,—nay, amidst the empty and frequently worse than empty literature which overflows from our cheap and teeming press, it would oftentimes prove positively injurious. In the language of the philosophic Wayland, " we have put it into the power of every man to read, and read he will whether for good or for evil. It remains yet to be decided whether what we have already done shall prove a blessing or a curse."

New-York has the proud honor of being the first government in the world, which has established a free library system adequate to the wants and exigencies of her whole population. It extends its benefits equally to all conditions, and in all local situations. It not only gives profitable employment to the man of leisure, but it passes the threshold of the laborer, offering him amusement and instruction after his daily toil is over, without increasing his fatigues or subtracting from his earnings. It is an interesting reflection that there is no portion of our territory so wild or remote, where man has penetrated, that the library has not peopled the wilderness around him, with the good and wise of this and other ages, who address to him their silent monitions, cul-

tivating and strengthening within him, even amidst his rude pursuits, the principles of humanity and civilization.

It has been objected by a few short sighted men, to the library system, that a portion of the people do not reap any benefit from it, because they will not read the books thus placed within their reach. The fact is unfortunately true, but it argues a defect elsewhere than in the system. Among a population comprising every grade of education and intelligence, and of whom but a limited number, comparatively speaking, enjoyed opportunities for cultivating an early taste for reading, it could not be anticipated that all would immediately avail themselves of the advantages thus proffered to them. The mind, like the body, acquires regulated habits of action. If it does not learn early to seek enjoyment and instruction in books, it rarely does in after life, unless it be in cases where a strong natural taste for reading has not, for the want of books, been able to previously develope itself. And although the steadily advancing circulation of the libraries shows that much has been and will yet be gained among our adult population, it is to the rising generation mainly, that we must look for the theatre of their greatest triumphs. *In the rising generation the taste for reading must be formed.* But conceding there should always be a portion who should obstinately reject these advantages, — does this furnish a sufficient reason why they should be withheld from those whose tastes and aspirations are more elevated, whose thirst for knowledge is stronger? Should but a small portion of the inhabitants of any school district be made wiser and happier, nay, should one young mind be trained forward by this means to a career of usefulness and honor, would not the expense of the most extensive library be more than compensa-

ted for? How many "mute inglorious" sons of Genius have first felt within them the kindling of Promethean fires; how many great undertakings, important discoveries, and sublime achievements have first shadowed forth the dim outlines of their inception, on the mental speculum, upon the perusal of the writings of some preceding wayfarer in the same, or some kindred path of renown, the biographies of illustrious men fully attest. We have it on his own authority that the reading of Defoe's Essay on Projects, first planted in the mighty mind of Franklin the germ of those discoveries, by which, in the language of Bishop Doane, "the poor tallow-chandler's son added new provinces to the domain of science, bound the lightning with a hempen cord, and brought it harmless from the skies." Franklin's is but an isolated example among a thousand, which occur to the student of biography. Genius, like grosser possessions, has its lines of descent, though unlike them, it heeds not consanguineal ties, or those of country or tongue. The boy who to-day plays round the cabin of his sire, in wildernesses which skirt the Mississippi, may, from an accidental perusal of some popular exposition of their discoveries—a reading of some portion of their works, or those of other writers on the same topics, be led in a few short years, to soar with a loftier flight, and pierce with a deeper ken into the arcana of the Universe, than have Arago and Herschel; strike the lyre with a sublimer touch than Goëthe or Wordsworth; or discourse on the philosophies of the material and spiritual world, with a deeper comprehensiveness than Cuvier or Cousin,—and the same boy, untouched with a live coal from the altars of their genius, may pass through life an indifferent farmer or mechanic—not conspicuous even among the dignitaries of the town in which he lives. It is true that such master spirits are not

vouchsafed to every nation or age—much less may we anticipate that they will start up in every school district. Though the occasional reward, they are not the first nor greatest end of those means which we put in operation for the amelioration of our species.

It is better that all should be raised to the necessary standard—that all should be made intelligent and the means of rational happiness placed within their grasp, than that a few should be elevated far above the intellectual companionship of their kind, and the masses be left sunk in ignorance and sensuality. The educator works the great mine of humanity for the commoner metals ; these he separates from their dross, and prepares for the useful purposes of life ;—and though veins of richer mineral, or the sparkling gem may occasionally reward his efforts, experience has taught him that their occurrence is at too rare intervals, to justify him in abandoning for their exclusive pursuit, ores, which if of less value, are a thousand times more abundant and accessible.

A colonial nation, we inherited the matured literature of England : but in our country as in that, this literature has not extended to the masses. In instituting a general library system, we created or rather put in circulation, the first really popular literature, beyond that contained in the newspaper, and in the books of the Sunday school. Can any one doubt then, that we have reached a point or phase in our civilization which demands the exercise of a provident care, an anxious, if not a timid circumspection ?

It was a saying of Fletcher, " let me make the songs of a people, and I care not who makes their laws." There has been an age, when the declaration would not have been an exaggerated one. With-

out the Iliad, Greece might never have had her Thermopylæ and Marathon. Her irresistible commanders fought in the ideal presence of, and weighed themselves in the balance with, Achilles and Agamemnon. Until the period of her subversion, Olympus rested not more firmly on the soil of Greece, than did the impress of Homer's genius on her character and literature. The influence of the bard or scald over the ancient British, Germanic and Scandinavian tribes, partook of the character of direct inspiration. At his strains of plaintive lamentation, they listened subdued, and wept; when he exchanged these for the stern images of war and victory, they clashed their shields in fury, and shouted for battle. He could subdue the fiery warrior to "more than woman's mildness," or with a fierce and overwhelming mastery, drive him forth convulsed and foaming with the mad and unquenchable fury of the Bersaerkir.

Under our colder skies, and in a less imaginative age, the poet has lost his exclusive power. Susceptibilities yet remain in the popular mind, and genius has not lost the art of reaching them. But it must make its approaches through other avenues. Mankind now study utility—and though they may sometimes err in the object, all are united in the pursuit. Mankind, too, have begun to reason. They may reason unsoundly, but few entertain fixed opinions on any subject, which were not adopted, by what constituted, in their own estimation, a correct process of reasoning. We may convince a man with false reasoning, but he is not disposed to take any thing on authority—much less could he be reached by a direct appeal to the imagination. It is singular to note the rapidity with which that faculty of the mind, which we term reason, has asserted its long delayed but rightful mastery—and the substantial

power and influence which it confers on those who possess it in an eminent degree. Only so far back as the days of Elizabeth, that mighty philosopher,* of whom it has been said,† in reference to his predecessors, that "he drew a sponge over the table of human knowledge," was socially, politically, and physically, a taper which one breath of the haughty Tudor, or even of the weak Stuart, could have extinguished forever. His writings would have been as chaff opposed to the will of royalty. Independent of his titles and offices, it may well be doubted whether they would have given him the consideration in the minds of his countrymen, enjoyed by any second rate servitor of the court. He would have been as the veriest nothing compared with the minion Leicester, the profligate and contemptible Buckingham! Turn we over the page to the reign of the the third George. A Pitt and a Burke already shook aloft the sceptre of mind over that of royalty. They reasoned with mankind, and they conquered them. Now, a statesman‡ elevated to the peerage of England for his talents, fears not, and hesitates not to attack the memory of the grandsire of his Sovereign, with a zeal and energy which reminds us of the mad hermit of Engaddi crushing rocks beneath his iron flail! In France the descendants of Condé's and Montmorency's give place to the sons of advocates and artizans.§ In our own country, if a statesman of any high rank can be pointed out, who can be said to have owed any thing to an inherited great name or distinction, or who can actually lay claim to it, he

* Bacon. † By Goethe. ‡ Brougham.

§ It is stated in an anonymous French work of which Mr. R. M. Walsh published a translation in 1841, that the celebrated Guizot is the son of a provincial advocate—Thiers the son of a blacksmith.

forms an exception to a rule which is nearly universal.

The pale student sitting in his study, if it be given to him to grapple with and to vanquish the human understanding, exerts a deeper influence—one that will be longer, and if properly directed, more beneficially felt, than that wielded by whole hosts of more observed worldlings,—by the official, the warrior, or the man of wealth. He has neither armies nor treasures—but he has *books*. With these can he conquer. No barriers impede his progress—no fortress walls can shut him out. He requires no garrisons to maintain his conquests—no new contests to reassert his supremacy. Every understanding overcome by him, becomes his fortress—every captive, a willing recruit. To widen a former proposition somewhat, there can be no doubt that he who can control the *reading* of a people, can control their character. He who has access to every ear at all times, and on all occasions; who can follow man to his fireside, and accompany him in his hours of relaxation from daily cares; who can steal with him to his closet and into solitude, and be often present in his meditations, even when his hands are engaged in toil,—can and must, if not suddenly, gradually and certainly, mould and influence his tastes, his opinions, and his character.

Such is the powerful and omnipresent agent, which by means of the school libraries, we have brought in contact with our population! To give it still greater influence as well as importance, it is the first, and thereby the forming literature of the masses. Who shall doubt that by it, the character of our people may be elevated and dignified—lessons of virtue, moderation and stability deeply impressed on them—in a word, that our moral and intellectual civilization may be materially and permanently ad-

vanced,—or on the other hand, that all these advantages may be thrown away, and the seeds of disorder, licentiousness and crime, sown in fatal profusion?

The method of selecting these libraries has already been established. With that strong reliance on popular virtue and popular understanding, which accords so well with the theory and genius of our institutions, the choice of books has, in the first instance, been left exclusively to the immediate agents of the people. Should the event justify this reliance, it will afford strong, and to the philanthropist, cheering proof of the same ability on the part of a well informed and free people, to conduct the successive steps of their moral and intellectual progression, that experience has already demonstrated they possess, in meliorating their political systems. Should they fail, and should the school officer fail in exercising those restraining powers vested in him in necessary cases, the libraries will stand a humiliating monument of weakness, folly, and wasted means.

Before proceeding to a direct examination of the books which should, or should not be introduced into the school libraries, it may be well to pause and ask what, if any, are the adverse agencies which threaten to give a wrong direction to their selection. By far the most dangerous, are those which grow out of the prevailing literature of the day. The discovery of processes cheapening and expediting the multiplication and diffusion of books has known no limit. Pecuniary hazard no longer imposes its salutary restrictions on the publisher, and the work which goes into the hands of the London compositor on the first day of the month, will, before its last, have been read in the form of a mammoth newspaper, or a cheap pamphlet, in villages within the shadow of the

Rocky Mountains. Though there are exceptions to the remark, though there are Bancrofts, and Prescotts, and Alisons, and Guizots and other worthy laborers in the field, it cannot be denied or concealed that the current, and most generally read publications of the day, taken as a whole, are of a frivolous and uninstructive character. The massive literature of the concluding portion of the seventeenth, and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, may be retained on the shelves of the library, as the antique dresses of the courtiers of Anne and Louis are preserved in the wardrobes of their descendants; but the former would excite nearly as much surprise in the hands of the mass of fashionable readers, as would the latter on their persons.

This prevailing literature, as has been already said, has not reached the masses. But it is the fashionable literature, and thereby contagious; and it is the *cheap* literature. It is the first which the bookmerchant spreads on his counter, and which the itinerant vender presses on his unread purchaser. When we take into consideration the fact, that a large portion of those who purchase for the school libraries, have had no previous acquaintance with the books so purchased, it would be surprising indeed, if the class in consideration did not find their way into, nay, swallow up these libraries, unless the most ceaseless vigilance is exercised. In every county and town, the bookseller, who will faithfully point out to those purchasing for school libraries, such books, and such alone as are suitable for that purpose, should receive the marked and publicly expressed approbation of the local superintendents.

And is there not another agent, which has wound itself, and circulated like life blood through every artery of the body politic—which is as cherished as it is universal—which must too often be ranked with

those whose tendencies are to give a wrong bias to popular reading? No man of sense or intelligence, would wish to curtail the circulation of the newspaper. Liberty, deprived of her free press, were a beleagured camp stripped of its sentinels. But has it not been conceded as well as deplored, by the many able and truthful men who assist in wielding this mighty engine, that its objects have been often prostituted—that it has often sunk to become the type, as well as the purveyor, of the most frivolous and worthless literature of the day. Who shall wonder that the boy's first quest in the school library, as has been so often complained, is after some tale of atrocity,* seduction,† or sickly sentimentality,‡ when from his earliest childhood their epitomes and counterparts have been weekly placed before him, in the miscalled "family" newspaper! We may be thankful that should the libraries resist these influences, they will soon correct them!

Having glanced at the importance of making the common school libraries a vehicle of correct literature, and specified some causes operating to produce a contrary result, it would seem appropriate in an officer, who in addition to his ordinary official cognizance of the subject, stands specially charged with its examination by the head of the department, to submit some general reflections on the nature and character of the books which should, or should not be admitted into these libraries; and the principles on which such discrimination should be made. It would unreasonably extend the limits of this report, and occupy a province more appropriately belong-

* Pirates' Book, Lives of Celebrated Banditti of all Nations, Newgate Calendar, etc.

† George Barnwell, Eliza Wharton, etc.

‡ A large proportion of the current novels of the day.

ing to the State Superintendent, to attempt to give an extended list of approved or disapproved individual books. The propriety of taking such a step, on the part of that functionary, will be hereinafter discussed. With a few exceptions, introduced more particularly by way of illustration, this report will confine itself to *classes* of books. For more convenient reference, these will be considered under separate heads, even at the expense of occasional repetition.

### 2. *Enumeration.*

There are about ten thousand books in the common school libraries of the county.* There does not appear a proportionate increase from the number reported last year, from the fact that the false system of enumeration, in regard to double districts, alluded to in my last annual report, has been corrected, by a recent order of the Superintendent.

### 3. *Circulation.*

The average circulation of books has increased since the preceding year. I think it then did not

* There are 875,000 volumes in the common school libraries of the State. It may be interesting, in this connexion, to take into view the number of volumes, in some of the most celebrated libraries of ancient and modern times. The Alexandrian is said, probably fabulously, to have contained 700,000. The library of the Moors, at Cordova, in the twelfth century, contained 250,000. The royal library at Paris, contains 650,000 ; Munich, 500,000 ; the Bodleian, 500,000 ; St. Petersburg, 400,000 ; Copenhagen, 400,000 ; the Vatican, 360,000 ; Berlin, 320,000 ; Vienna, 300,000 ; British Museum, 270,000 ; Dresden, 250,000 ; Gottingen, 200,000.

Of American libraries, Harvard College has about 40,000 ; Boston Athenæum, say 30,000 ; Philadelphia, say 30,000 ; N. Y. State library, say 20,000.

exceed one-fourth of the whole number; now, it will fall little short of one-third.

The system established in this State, requires a distinct library in each district, thereby narrowing the range of selection to the means possessed by each; and in any town, the several districts will possess, in the main, the same books. The extension of the system proposed by Mr. Barnard, in his Annual Report to the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut, in 1841, may be thought to present some advantages in this respect, not possessed by our own. Mr. Barnard recommends that the entire sum appropriated to each town be expended under the direction of the town officer, and the books placed in as many cases as there are districts, each case to pass in succession through all the districts in the town. Each district will thus, at any one time, have access to as many books as under the other plan, and in the end, to all the books in the several libraries. This increases the variety, by the number of districts, and keeps up the interest of novelty by a contstant supply of new authors. By local regulations, the cases can be returned to the town superintendent, at certain stated periods, for inspection, as well as for exchange, and thus the books will be more likely to be preserved, and any damage or loss assessed to the proper district.

Mr. Barnard, in his forthcoming volume, "on National Education," strongly urges the importance of having all books which are published exclusively for school libraries, contain a *glossary*, explaining briefly all technical or scientific terms or names, dates and events not readily understood by juvenile readers. The want of such a glossary, impairs the value of many books now in the libraries, not only for juvenile readers, but for a large portion of adults, whose

education and reading has been limited. The school library, published under the sanction of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, is in this respect, superior to any other now before the public.

### 4. *Condition of Books.*

The condition of the books continues generally good. The binding on many of them, however, is too frail for their proper preservation. This is a point which should receive particular attention from those who purchase for districts; and local officers should studiously discourage the purchase of the books of publishers, whom parsimony or negligence renders inattentive in this particular.

### 5. *Regulations.*

I adhere to the opinion expressed by me in my last annual report, that the library regulations, as a whole, require no amendment. I would recommend, however, that authority be conferred on county superintendents to extend on application, in suitable cases, the time during which books may be retained out of the libraries.

### 6. *Size of Books.*

The size of books may seem a trivial consideration in this connection. Experience, however, has demonstrated that it is an important one. Unless in extensive libraries, where a wide range of reading tastes are to be gratified, as in the case of cities or very populous districts, it is not advisable to purchase the largest and most elaborate class of publications, on any given topic. The objection against them is two-fold. They are too expensive, and the

chance is not so great that they will be generally read. Hume's History of England and its continuations, for example, would exhaust the library fund in many small districts for several years, and thus preclude the purchase of other histories and works on other topics equally important. How many children, and, among an actively engaged and laboring population, how many adults, would undertake and finally accomplish any thing like a careful and well-digested perusal of this great work?

On the other hand, books should not be purchased, which, to secure brevity, have been reduced to mere epitomes or compendiums, or, what is far worse, a class of publications greatly abounding—put in a condensed form to render them more saleable—which are compiled, rather than written, by authors incapable of grasping their subjects, and utterly deficient in style. Marshall's Life of Washington, or the Life of Franklin by his Grandson, may be too elaborate works for the smaller school libraries; but who would leave the lives of these illustrious men to the handling of an author of the intellectual or literary capacity of Weems?

### 7. *Useful, as contradistinguished from merely amusing, Books.*

The first cardinal rule to be adopted in relation to the character of all books admitted into the school libraries, is, that they shall be of a character to diffuse sound and useful instruction. If any doubts could have existed on this point, they have been settled by repeated declarations of the State Superintendent. Amusement is not incompatible with instruction. It may add to the zest and beguile the difficulties of acquiring knowledge. But mere amusement constitutes no part of the objects sought in the establishment of the school libraries; and when it forms the prin-

cipal, or even a considerable separate end of literature, such literature sinks below the standard of that which a government may, with dignity, provide for and recommend to its people. In deciding what books shall be considered useful ones, however, we are to have regard to the mental developement and previous acquirements of those intended to be benefited by their perusal. We are to bear in mind that it is as easy to fall into the error of soaring above, as of falling below, the comprehension of the reader, and that it is a mistake quite as fatal, and perhaps not less frequent. A ripe and liberally educated scholar would not find instruction in works which would be deeply instructive to thousands of our population, and an ordinarily well-educated man would scarcely seek instruction in books adapted to the capacities of childhood. This brings us to the consideration of an interesting and important department in the libraries.

### 8. *Juvenile Books.*

But does it follow, because manhood and youth require different intellectual aliment, that none shall be supplied to the latter? It has already been said that youth is the period to fix and cultivate habits of reading, and that, if a taste for it is not acquired at this period, it rarely is in after life. Every day that we defer to place suitable books in the hands of the child, after he has attained sufficient maturity of understanding to receive moral and intellectual impressions, to treasure up useful facts, is so much time irretrievably squandered. And there is another weighty and solemn consideration. If we neglect to sow good seed in a soil which, like this, cannot, by the very law of its being, remain a moment unproductive, what warrant have we that

"Weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,"

will not spring up and occupy it in spite of all our subsequent efforts?

Shall we attempt to drag up the mind and taste to a precocious developement, by inciting children to read works adapted to fully matured capacities? We ought not to, if we could—we cannot, if we make the attempt. That the mind can be led forward, and its powers matured with far greater rapidity, by adapting instruction to its feeblest state of developement, and only increasing the solidity and strength of the mental aliment, to keep pace with its gradually unfolding energies, is as true in relation to the instruction sought to be derived from the library as to that given in the school-room; and to the discovery of this fact in its connection with the latter, we are indebted for the most important improvements in modern teaching. Books and studies above the reach of the understanding not only lead it forward slowly, but they fasten on it a habit which is rarely subsequently laid aside, and which, if not, proves fatal to its vigor, and to any high grade of attainments. That mental indolence or languor, that habit of slurring over difficult propositions, is alluded to, which deters the mind from following and seizing upon the higher steps of ratiocination—which makes the man a careless listener, an unweighing reader, and an unsound thinker.

The ignorant teacher may goad forward the child to attempt studies beyond its comprehension; but fortunately, in relation to the library, no such coercion is often attempted. Nature, if left to herself, exercises a conservative agency; she spurns at such absurdities. It may be assumed as an undeniable general proposition that, if books are above the comprehension of those in whose hands they are placed, they will not be read; and, accordingly, the mass of books in the school libraries are not read by children. An ex-

tended and faithful scrutiny has established the point conclusively, in regard to the county under my jurisdiction, that the average class of books in the libraries—for example, the series of the Messrs. Harper—are not generally, or to any considerable extent, read by youth between the ages of seven and fourteen years. Of course, the children here referred to are those who are receiving their education in our common schools. And if the boy or girl has reached an age when, as is usually the case among our laboring population, their attention begins to be fixed upon, and their time during a considerable portion of the year occupied in, the avocations of their parents,—to repeat a former question,—what chance is there that they will contract the habit of reading afterwards? or how materially is that chance diminished? To resort to a trite simile, it may be said that we have given to our people a ladder to moral and intellectual elevation; but we have placed no lower "rounds" in it—none within reach of the child. And while the mental stature is acquiring size and strength to reach higher ones, a distaste is acquired—or, what results in the same thing, no taste is acquired for the ascent.

At the risk of pursuing this question beyond the limits properly assignable to it, the important interests involved in its decision would seem to demand that an objection against these juvenile departments in our libraries, or rather a proposed substitute for them, shall be briefly examined. It has been contended that a sufficient supply of this class of books will be found in the Sunday school and nursery. In relation to the first, its books are too limited in their range of topics, too few in number, and too inaccessible to the mass of population, and oftentimes too objectionable to those entertaining different religious faiths, to ever supply the place of a necessary department in the common school libraries. Besides, is it becoming that the chil-

dren of the republic shall depend upon the charity of religious denominations for that mental food which they are as justly entitled to receive at the hands of the government as are their parents? In relation to the "nursery," could we have sufficient surety that the parent would make the necessary purchases of books, it would be contrary to the dictates of wise policy, as well as to an established feature in the common school library system, to surrender up their selection exclusively to the tastes or caprices of every individual parent. But whatever may be true of cities,—though the comparison would probably result little in their favor,—a school officer whom official duties has carried much among the people of the country—into their houses—and this too under circumstances well calculated to ascertain the fact—cannot fail to have observed that no such class of books is to be found among the mass of our population. Probably not one householder in five, throughout the state, possesses a collection, or even a single volume, of well-selected juvenile books!

The foregoing facts and conclusions are presented as the results of no hasty observations or reflections. The inquiries which led to them were suggested by the universal prevalence of a known and acknowledged evil. They have been long and zealously prosecuted, and the effect carefully noted, in districts where properly-selected juvenile books have been introduced into the libraries. In presenting my conclusions, I cannot, in justice to the responsible trust committed to me, and in justice to what I believe to be momentous social interests, omit to respectfully recommend that all restrictions heretofore placed on the introduction of this class of books into the school libraries, be removed; and that the purchase of a judicious series of juvenile books, of a class equal to "Parley's Magazine" or the "Rollo Books" be rec-

cmmended to every school district, by the Head of Department.*

* The following is an extract from the last annual report of the State Superintendent, in reference to this branch of the subject :—

"There is reason to apprehend that the officers charged with the duty of selecting books for these libraries have too generally failed to appreciate the importance of a suitable provision for the intellectual and moral wants of the *children* of the district. Much misapprehension has existed on this subject, in consequence of the general prohibition, contained in the instructions heretofore communicated from this Department, against the introduction into the school libraries of books of 'a *merely juvenile* character.' The true principles upon which the selections for these institutions should be made, may be clearly inferred, as well from the original design of the appropriation, as from the contemporaneous exposition of the superintendent, under whose immediate auspices it was first carried into effect. The distribution of the fund provided for this purpose was directed, by the act under which it was supplied, to be made 'in like manner and upon the like condition as the school moneys are now or shall hereafter be distributed, except that the trustees of the several districts shall appropriate the sum received to the purchase of a district library.' The amount of library money, therefore, under this provision, to which each district became entitled, was in proportion to the *number of children* between the ages of five and sixteen, residing therein, compared with the aggregate number in all the districts, and not in proportion to the adult population merely, or the whole population combined. The primary object of the institution of district libraries was declared, in the circular of General Dix, accompanying the publication of the act of 1838, to be 'to disseminate works suited to the intellectual improvement of the great body of the people, rather than to throw into school districts, for the use of the young, *books of a merely juvenile character;* and that, by collecting a large amount of useful information where it will be easily accessible, the influence of these establishments can hardly fail to be in the highest degree salutary *to those who have finished their common school education, as well as to those who have not. The object in view will probably be best answered by having books suitable for all ages above ten or twelve years, though the proportion for those of mature age ought to be by far the greatest.*' When it is considered that the foundations of education are laid during the period of youth, and

### 9. *Moral Tendencies of Books.*

It would be an insult to the virtuous sense of the community, to suppose that it would be necessary to offer a caution, and more especially an argument, to any portion of our population, against the selection of books to be read by themselves, or placed in the hands of their children, of a known and openly recognized immoral character. Few such instances of depravity are to be found even among individuals; and they never form a majority among a population, the aggregate of which, if not polished, is never debased. But vice and immorality often lurk under specious coverings. And, unfortunately, their poison often comes associated with the most splendid efforts

that the taste for reading and study is, with rare exceptions, formed and matured at this period, if at all, the importance of furnishing an adequate supply of books, adapted to the comprehension of the immature but expanding intellect, suited to its various stages of mental growth, and calculated to lead it onward by a gradual and agreeable transition, from one field of intellectual and moral culture to another, cannot fail to be appreciated. And even if the intellectual wants of many of the inhabitants of the districts, of more mature age, are duly considered, it admits of little doubt that a due proportion of works of a more familiar and elementary character than are the mass of those generally selected, would have a tendency not only to promote, but often to create, that taste for mental pursuits which leads, by a rapid and sure progression, to a more extended acquaintance with the broad domains of knowledge. Those whose circumstances and pursuits in life have hitherto precluded any systematic investigation of literary subjects, and who, if they possessed the desire, were debarred the means of intellectual improvement now brought within their reach, can scarcely be expected to pass at once to that high appreciation of useful knowledge, which the perusal of elaborate treatises on any of the numerous branches of science or metaphysics requires; and the fact brought to view by the annual reports of the county superintendents, that by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the several districts neglect to avail themselves of the privileges

of human genius. As a literary man, I would as soon banish bread from my table as Shakspeare from my library; yet I hesitate not to say there are scenes and passages in the writings of the great dramatist, which, though strictly in keeping with the tastes of his times, should preclude their indiscriminate circulation among children, and those whose tastes and understandings are yet crude and uncultivated. Editions of many of the early English poets—of nearly all those of the era of Dryden and Pope, including both of those peerless geniuses—and of a moiety of the moderns, would require expurgation before they could be properly placed on the shelves of a school library. In the department of fiction, the humor of Smollet, and the sparkling genius of Fielding and Le Sage, cannot atone for the presence of a similar taint-spot. Lat-

of the library, indicates too general a failure to supply these institutions with the requisite proportion of elementary books.

"In the selection of books for the district libraries, suitable provisions should be made for every gradation of intellectual advancement; from that of a child, whose insatiable curiosity eagerly prompts to a more intimate acquaintance with the world of matter and of mind, to that of the most finished scholar, who is prepared to augment his stock of knowledge by every means which may be brought within his reach. The prevalence of an enlightened appreciation of the requirements of our people in this respect, has already secured the application of the highest grade of mental and moral excellence to the elementary departments of literature; and works adapted to the comprehension of the most immature intellect, and at the same time capable of conveying the most valuable information to more advanced minds, have been provided, wholly free, on the one hand, from that puerility which is fit only for the nursery, and, on the other, from those generalizations and assumptions which are adapted only to advanced stages of mental progress. A more liberal infusion of this class of publications, sanctioned by the approbation of the most experienced friends of education, into our district libraries, would, it is confidently believed, remove many of those obstacles to their general utility, which otherwise are liable to be perpetuated from generation to generation."

terly, the tide of demoralizing fictions, both in England and France, has swelled into a flood. Most of these lack even the gloss of genius; but there are unfortunate exceptions. The skepticism that glares up amid the lurid flames of Godwin, and some kindred writers, is not so dangerous as the bespangled pictures and sophisms of one who can at times write with as pure and lofty a pen as the author of Pelham. The last-named book one would think was written by a baronet, with an express purpose to surround puppyism and vice with the prestiges of his rank—to give them currency and respect, by stamping them with the impress of aristocracy!

History and the higher walks of biography have rarely stooped to offend in these particulars. But in the vulgar compilations of the latter, in the *marvellous* and *criminal* department, we find a fruitful harvest of the bad. By what, at first view, would seem an unfortunate tendency of at least the uninstructed mind, vice rarely acquires repulsiveness from closer inspection and continued contemplation. Even its ultimate retribution inspires sympathy oftener than it excites awe. The executed criminal is always a hero or a martyr with a portion of the spectators of his exit; and it was a sound philosophy which dictated, in our statute-book, that what would seem to be the most instructive and warning event, in the whole career of the felon, should be hidden from the public eye. Doubly important were it, then, were it practicable, to hide on paper, as well as in real life, the oftentimes sanguinary and disgusting details of atrocity which precede and give occasion for the closing scene. The increased danger of these publications, when, as is often the case, vice is painted in lofty and romantic colors, need not be insisted on. But whatever views may be taken by authors who have thus misapplied their powers, the tendency of this entire class of publi-

cations is to pervert and blunt the moral sensibilities, to degrade and brutalize the taste.

If, to give identity and distinctness to the classes of works deemed objectionable for the purpose under consideration, those of individual writers of high literary rank have been specified, no one should claim that genius is entitled to any exemption from animadversion, when it sins against the severest code of morals; and its most captivating or sublime displays should not excuse the presence, or even a suspicion, of immoral tendencies. If there are those who are so inconsiderate as to believe that every work which may be safe and profitable to a matured and cultivated understanding must therefore be so to childhood and partial cultivation, and who are prepared to characterize the proscription of the works designated, and those of the same class, from the school libraries, as the fruits of a Gothic taste or an overstrained morality, it should not, nevertheless, deter the school officer from faithfully discharging his duty. The responsibility must be met, and I have preferred to meet it here, to an attempt to take shelter under any vague generalities. We should read the monitory tale of the past but poorly, did we fail to learn in it the important lesson, that moral civilization must always advance hand in hand with intellectual civilization, to insure the advantageous fruits or the perpetuity of either. And we can throw aside the self-blackened author with the less regret, as in every age of English—European literature—and in every department of it, there have not been wanting pure and truthful spirits, who have welled forth waters as rich and sparkling, and unmired with any gross commixture—who have written nothing which "dying they could wish to blot."

### 10. *Sectarian Books.*

The common sense of every man would teach him that the school libraries do not furnish an appropriate field for religious controversies, and particularly for those vehement attacks which heated sectaries sometimes conceive it their right or their duty to make on other religious bodies or systems. The common school and its library are neutral ground, on which those professing different and antagonist creeds can meet together in peace; and this neutrality must be preserved, if we would preserve the utility of these educational institutions. The state superintendent has declared [Spencer, Vol. School Laws, 1841, p. 177] that works "of a sectarian character, or of hostility to the Christian religion, should on no account be admitted" into the libraries. But beyond this general declaration, no criteria or tests have been set forth, by which the people of districts, or those purchasing for them, can decide, with any great degree of certainty, what works, touching at all on religious topics, shall or shall not come within the prohibitory rule. It might seem that any more particular description or definition could give no additional clearness to the two simple propositions contained in the dictum of the superintendent; and perhaps such would be the case, if every one should bring to their consideration a catholic spirit and an unbiased judgment—a disposition to discover their true intent, rather than to bend and render them subservient to previously conceived views. That they, or rather the first of them, has been often misinterpreted, one familiar with the libraries cannot but know. In some instances, religious denominations have supposed that, in establishing an immunity from attack for themselves and a few affiliated sects, they have exhausted all the charity embodied or contem-

plated in the principle. Others, with nicer scrupulousness, have felt themselves called upon to reject all works in which the religious biases of the author are made even incidentally to appear.

In view of these facts, it would seem incumbent on the competent tribunal to establish further and more definite criteria for deciding what works shall be included under the head of "sectarian" ones, and to take measures to enforce a more correct and uniform rule of construction. Notwithstanding the seeming delicacy with which the excited feelings and mutual suspicions of religious bodies have invested this task, it is one which the school officer is not at liberty to shrink from. To delay it longer is to involve the subject in new difficulties—to encumber its final adjustment with the extirpation of errors which are daily accumulating, and which in the beginning might have been easily, to a great extent, prevented. Believing that an exploration of this debateable ground requires rather a frank directness of purpose, uninfluenced by fear or prejudice, than any shining abilities; esteeming this, moreover, in common with every other topic connected with the common school libraries, directly assigned to my consideration by my official superior, I shall not hesitate to set forth the views in relation to it which have hitherto guided my official action, together with the reasons which led to their adoption.

It may be well, in ascertaining the true interpretation of the phrase "sectarian books," to first inquire the meaning of the word which defines or particularizes the kind of books under consideration. The word "sectarian," in its adjective form, as the suffix would imply, signifies "pertaining to a sect." "Sect," notwithstanding a more limited etymological signification, is universally understood to mean, in religion as well as in philosophy, a body "united in tenets," and applies, by universal practice, equally to all religious

denominations. Sectarian books, then, are the books pertaining to a sect, as such—that is, devoted to the promulgation or defence of its peculiar tenets,—in the same way in which we speak of *Trinitarian* books or authors, when we mean books or authors sustaining the doctrine of the *Trinity*. Whether from the fact that the defence of one class of tenets implies a contradiction of or attack on another class, or that such attacks usually emanate from antagonist sects, a work assailing the religious views of any sect or church is, by common consent, ranked under the head "sectarian," as much as one designed to promulgate its views.

One point remains to be settled. What bodies shall be recognized as "religious" denominations or sects? We sometimes use the word religion as synonymous with personal piety, or what *we* esteem the true system of faith and worship. Under either of these definitions, the word would find no uniformity of interpretation, and a door would be left open to the most flagrant abuses. It would virtually authorize the dominant sect to pronounce itself a "religious" sect, and deprive all others of the rights or immunities which they are equally entitled to in the same character. Religion, in the extended signification of the word, implies *any* system of faith and worship. There may be true and false religions. The doctrines of Trinitarianism and Unitarianism, being exactly opposite to each other, must, one or the other, be untrue,—yet both are equally systems of religion. The believers in both can claim, with equal propriety, to be "religious sects." It is not necessary, here, to go beyond the pale of civilization to inquire in relation to the religious systems of heathen nations. We have neither Pagans nor Mahometans among us. But every body of men among us, acknowledging the existence of a God, and any system of faith and worship in and towards him,

must, in the eye of any law or official regulation, come equally under the denomination of a religious sect. We come, then, to the first general rule in relation to the school libraries, deducible from the above positions :—

1. *No works written professedly to uphold or attack any sect or creed in our country*, CLAIMING *to be a religious one, shall be tolerated in the school libraries.*

The question now arises, how far this rule of exclusion shall apply to an extensive class of literary works, evidently not written with a sectarian object, but which incidentally manifest the religious preferences or antipathies of their writers. This class embraces many of the standard productions of our language. There are, indeed, few books written which do not contain such disclosures. There is, probably, not a historian of England who does not betray an evident leaning against the Protestants or Catholics. Clarendon and Hume are not exceptions to this remark. In biography, these predilections are displayed almost as a matter of course, in alluding to the religious tenets of their subjects. In Pope's Essay on Man, notwithstanding the volumes once written to disprove it, we feel assured that the author leans towards the skepticism of St. John, (the celebrated Viscount Bolingbroke,) whom he addresses in the first line of that much-read poem. Other productions as clearly evince the sway subsequently acquired over his religious views by that giant defender of Christianity, Bishop Warburton. Gibbon, throughout his magnificent History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, clearly exhibits the earlier and worse bias which has been alluded to in Pope. The whole tenor of Milton's Paradise Lost militates against the doctrine of Universalism. These instances might be indefinitely multiplied, and from among the choicest productions of our language. To exclude them from the school libraries would be to perpetrate

a great evil to escape a smaller one; for surely, if selected indiscriminately in relation to their religious biases, and not allowed to assume any exclusive religious hue, he who would take umbrage at their introduction would exhibit a puerile sensibility, or rather irritability.

It may be said that in one, at least, of the instances cited, the works are not merely "sectarian," but actually of "hostility to the Christian religion," a class directly prohibited by the superintendent. But if the positions heretofore assumed are correct, works attacking other religions than the Christian—for example, those of the Jew, and that class of Unitarians who utterly deny the divine character of Christ—are equally excluded. This prohibition of the superintendent, then, was really embraced in his preceding one against "sectarian" works. Although it behoves us to be exceedingly cautious in tolerating any work even indirectly impugning the theory of our holy religion, and although some more strictness in enforcing the rule of exclusion in relation to such may be proper, it is in vain to say that it shall be made imperative in every possible instance coming within its letter. We must bear in mind, if we attempt to be tenacious to this extent, that a work containing one improper thought or unjust sentiment,—any thing, in short, deviating from entire holiness,—is actually "of hostility to the Christian religion." What literary production would escape ostracism on the application of such a test? While we would unhesitatingly condemn and reject portions of the writings of the Shaftesburys, of Bolingbroke, of Godwin, of Shelley, of Wolstonecraft, of Paine, of Lessing, of Voltaire, and others of the same class, there are those which, though they incidentally betray doctrines somewhat at variance with the theory of Christianity, it is evidently expedient to tolerate. And should the young read these books, we are always at

liberty to point out their errors—to administer the antidote. The second general rule, then, is,—

2. *Standard works on other topics shall not be excluded because they* INCIDENTALLY *and* INDIRECTLY *betray the religious opinions of their authors.*

There is a third class of literary productions which might, perhaps, be generally included under one or the other of the above heads, but which, to avoid ambiguity, will be separately considered. The distinctions drawn in relation to the two preceding rules are believed to be sufficiently clear and obvious to avoid, among intelligent persons, any necessity or great danger of error in giving them their true application. If any portion of the subject must be left involved in doubt or obscurity, let us confine this shadowy region to the least possible limits. The class of books now in view are those which, though ostensibly written on other topics, not only incidentally betray religious biases, but so far digress from the subject which they purport to treat, as to abound in direct defences of the religious views of their authors, and attacks on those of other persons; and those, whatever their theme, however dispassionately they may seem to be written, however free they may be from direct and open forms of crimination, which, nevertheless, hold up any religious body to contempt or execration, by singling out or bringing together only the darker parts of their history and character. It may be said that any attempt to separately classify such from those treated under the second rule is useless—that the point would always, practically, be settled by the caprices or religious views of the buyer. There is certainly such danger, but it is believed that the line of demarcation can be traced with sufficient distinctness to guide those who add to respectable intelligence an honest intent to discover and observe it. Direct illustration will, perhaps, be the readiest method to throw light on the sub-

ject; and, to meet the point explicitly and without reserve, a set of historical facts will be alluded to, the discussion of which is calculated, perhaps, above that of any others, to arouse the feelings and prejudices of two great divisions of the Christian world, and which have really, in a great majority of instances, formed the subjects of the works whose adoption or exclusion from the school libraries has been most frequently a matter of contest.

Every English historian must speak of the martyrs who suffered during the reign of Mary: he has a perfect right to express sympathy for the sufferer, indignation against the tyrannical monarch; the intelligent Roman Catholic now, as then,* will do no less; and this alone would in no point of view bring such history under the denomination of a "sectarian" one. But Fox's Book of Martyrs, constantly pointing to, and commenting on, the enormities of one religious body, with its pictorial *embellishments* of Protestants suffering the most horrible species of torture and martyrdom, would as clearly, whether the narrations contained in it are, in point of fact, true or false, come under the exclusory rule. No Protestant, assuredly, would claim that a parallel work, giving a history of the Catholic, and even opposite sects of Protestant martyrs, emboweled, beheaded, or burned, by the commands of the more able and politic, but little less sanguinary sister of the "bloody Mary," and by other Protestant princes and authorities,—particularly if illustrated with pictures as unnecessary to establish or explain facts as they are revolting to good taste,—no Protestant would claim that such a book would be a safe or suitable one to be placed in the hands of his children. He would fear, and justly, that enormities characteristic rather

* The pope's legate, in England, remonstrated against the severities practised by Mary.

of the spirit of a fierce and bloody age, than of any particular religious sect, might be mistaken by the immature mind for the legitimate and necessary fruits of a particular class of tenets,—the tenets believed by himself to be the true ones,—and that it might thus implant prejudices which it would be impossible to subsequently eradicate.

Let us adduce another illustration, which will, perhaps, bring this subject more nearly home to the majority of us, in some passages from the history of our Puritan forefathers. The noble Puritan—free as the eagle of his adopted land—brave as a lion in battle; who had trampled on the feudal chivalry of England at Marston Moor and Naseby, and now, to assert his liberty of conscience, his "freedom to worship God," braving the dangers of unexplored and unhospitable climes—now, with heroic fortitude, shaking the "depths of the forest's gloom" with his "hymns of lofty cheer;" and now, when forced to unsheath the straight old "Roundhead" sword, tracking the wily savage to his lair, through wintry forests and nearly impassable morasses, with a nerve more iron than the Spartan's,—the stout-hearted Standish, the apostolic Bradford, the subtle and intellectual Mather, the sagacious Winthrop,—all this forms a picture which the student of history will ever admire, and of which the American may justly be proud. But let us reverse it. Let us view the Puritan who fled from the persecution of the weak and tyrannical Stuarts, himself turned persecutor, driving into exile the equally protestant Baptist, putting to death the meek and uninterfering Quaker, beheading captive chiefs in cold blood, selling his Indian prisoners into slavery, and, lastly, sinking—sinking so ineffably, not only below the standard of decent humanity, but of decent intelligence, as to hang, drown, and burn miserable old women, on the paltry plea of witchcraft: view this side of the picture, and we learn

that intelligence, virtue, and even sincere piety, are not sufficient safeguards against the errors which grow out of the spirit of the age, which are incidental to the different epochs of a developing civilization. Shall the historian, who faithfully portrays the errors of our forefathers, be excluded from the school library? Certainly not. Apart from maintaining the truth, we want the benefit of their negative as well as their better examples. But let us suppose a work written expressly to point out every enormity chargeable to the Puritans; hunting up, and, as it were, recoloring, every forgotten detail of their errors; in short, exhibiting the subject only on one side; what would be our judgment of such a production? Would we not spurn it indignantly from the school library? As assuredly, yes. And if some overheated and visionary religionist should gravely describe all these enormities as the necessary fruits of the Protestantism of the Puritans, would not ridicule and contempt take the place, in our minds, of any soberer condemnation?

The high-minded and magnanimous Protestant will feel that

> "The quality of mercy is not strained;
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,"

on Catholic as well as Protestant; that it would be intolerant, as it would be unjust and unmanly, to ask any immunity from laws or official regulations for himself, which he would not as freely concede to Catholic, or even heretic—to any, in short, of the great brotherhood of civilized man. This brings us to the third rule:—

3. *Works, avowedly on other topics, which abound in direct and unreserved attacks on, or defences of, the character of any religious sect; or those which hold up any religious body to contempt or execration, by singling out or bringing together only the darker parts*

*of its history or character, shall be excluded from the school libraries.*

Is it said that, under the above rules, heresy and error are put on the same footing with true religion; that Protestant and Catholic, orthodox and unorthodox, Universalist, Unitarian, Jew, and even Mormon, derive the same immunity? The fact is conceded; and it is averred that each is equally entitled to it, in a government whose very constitution avows the principle of a full and indiscriminate religious toleration.

He who thinks it hard that he shall not be allowed to combat, through the medium of the school libraries, beliefs, the sin and error of which are as clear to him as is the light in heaven, will bear in mind that the library, at least, leaves him and his religious beliefs in as good a condition as it found him. If it will not propagate his tenets, it will leave them unattacked. If he is not allowed to use other men's money to purchase books to assault their religious faiths, he is not estopped from expending his own as he sees fit, in his private or in his Sunday school library; nor is he debarred from placing these books in the hands of all who are willing to receive them. His power of morally persuading his fellow-men is left unimpaired; nor will he, if he has any confidence in the recuperative energies of truth, if he believes his God will ultimately give victory to truth, ask more. In asking, or condescending to accept, the support of an earthly government, he admits the weakness of his cause, the feebleness of his faith. He leans on another arm than that which every page in the Bible declares all-sufficient. In what age of the world has any church entered into meretricious connexion with temporal governments, and escaped unsullied from the contact? Any approximation to such connexion, even in the minutest particular; any exclusive right or immunity given to one religious sect or another in the school library or else-

where, is not only anti-religious, but anti-republican. As men, we have the right to adopt religious creeds, and to attempt to influence others to adopt them; but as Americans, as legislators or officials dispensing privileges or immunities among American citizens, we have no right to know one religion from another. The persecuted and wandering Israelite comes here, and he finds no bar in our naturalization laws. The members of the Roman, Greek, or English church equally become citizens. Those adopting every hue of religious faith, every phase of heresy, take their place equally under the banner of the republic, and no ecclesiastical power can snatch even "the least of these" from under its glorious folds. Not an hour of confinement, not the amercement of a farthing, not the deprivation of a right or liberty weighing "in the estimation of a hair" can any such power impose on any American citizen, without his own full and entire acquiescence.

I have been more ample, perhaps too ample, in attempting to explain and illustrate this subject, in all its variety of attitudes, because I have reason to believe that far more misapprehension exists in relation to it than on any other connected with the selection of books for the common school libraries. I have had occasion to require the removal of more sectarian books than those of all the other offending classes put together. Narrow and unexpanded views have too generally prevailed. Among men entertaining every variety of erroneous views on this subject, I have not failed to find those whose intelligence or whose charity was so microscopic in its dimensions, that they have seriously defended works from the charge of sectarianism, on the ground that in assaulting a sect on what they considered the wrong side of the dividing line between Protestantism and Catholicism, orthodoxy or heresy, they really attack no religious body or sect!

that such bodies or sects are entitled neither to the name nor the immunities of "religious" ones!

### 11. *Political Books.*

The propriety of utterly excluding every work of the class commonly known as *political* from the school libraries is so obvious, that it requires neither argument nor comment. The rules for determining what works, in which the claims of particular political parties in the United States are at all alluded to, shall be admitted, should, it is submitted, be identical with those detailed under the preceding head, in relation to theological works. Books written avowedly to attack or defend political parties should be excluded; histories, biographies, or other works incidentally betraying the political predilections of the writer, may be admitted; but works which, though even ostensibly on other topics, contain repeated and direct attacks on, or defences of, any political party, should be excluded.

Under the first head it is unnecessary to adduce any examples. The arrogation of exclusive patriotism and sagacity in managing the affairs of state, the unsparing imputations on the motives and acts of opponents, so common to partisan publications in all countries, are too characteristic to be mistaken. This class, apart from our hebdomadal publications, which no one would think of placing in a school library, is an exceedingly small one in American literature. We have few publications, put in the form of books, bound, and sold from the shelves of the bookseller, which are devoted directly and avowedly to the discussion of partisan politics.

Under the second head ranks a large portion of our American histories and biographies. Among authors of reputation, among works written with the least design or hope of securing a place in our standard literature, but few exceptions to this remark can be pointed

out. This branch of our literature, be it said to our honor, has imbibed far less of a partisan coloring than in England.

In the third class are some lives of eminent politicians, narratives claiming the names of histories, designed to advocate the claims of politicians, and collections of legislative speeches, which advocate the measures of particular parties. The class of works more specially alluded to here, are those which are thrown into circulation in times of high political excitement, and usually with the design of influencing some approaching political struggle.

It should be understood that, in every biography or history alluding to the acts of eminent men, it is the license of the author to give the character of his subject the benefit of the best construction, in politics and other matters, which the circumstances and events having a bearing on the case admit of—if, in so doing, those circumstances and events are not misrepresented, or assaults on opponents indulged in. The right of self-defence is as sacred in regard to the character as the person; and the only restriction on a just exercise of this right is to be found in the ancient law maxim, which commands us "so to use our own as not to injure another's." It is not meant here that a great and good man's defence shall not be rendered complete, merely to shelter any low political tool or adventurer; but, to resort to direct examples, it would be in as bad taste and as improper, as it would be unnecessary, to attempt to upbuild the fame of Jefferson at the expense of that of Hamilton, or that of Madison at the expense of that of Jay. In political measures were they divided; in patriotism and integrity, between them there was no division. The massive and logical intellect of Hamilton, the more expansive and advanced philosophy of Jefferson, arrived at different results, led to different political measures;

but that man is un-American, who, because he coincides with the one, would disentomb and expose to rude scorn the ashes of the other.

Works discussing what may be legitimately termed politics,—that is, the science of government,—and which do not assume a partisan character, are properly admissible into the libraries. The Federalist, Debates in the Virginia and New York Conventions, the disquisitions contained in M. De Tocqueville's work on this country, etc., come under this head.

I am happy to say that I have never found a work in the school libraries of a partisan political character.

### 12. *Biography and History.*

Biography and history may be properly viewed under the same head. They must ever form a numerous and important department in every well-selected general library. They are among the first books which should be placed in the hands of the young, to cultivate a taste for useful and substantial reading, as well as for the purposes of instruction. Both are charts laid down by experience, pointing out the safe courses, as well as the rocks and shallows, of human life. Though they are commonly, to a considerable extent, interwoven with each other, each has a separate and appropriate sphere. Biography teaches its great lesson to man, more particularly as the individual; history addresses its exhortations and admonitions to him, as a being sustaining relations to society and to government.

The first place has been assigned to biography, contrary to the usual custom of writing and speaking, not without design. In the natural order of things, we should assuredly learn the wisdom, the experience, which pertain to the career of the man, preparatory to, as the first step to, learning those which pertain to the career of the citizen. And, accordingly, by what

would seem a wise instinct, biography is more attractive to the young, and its teachings more readily understood, than the higher and more complicated ones of history.

It would be but a repetition of stale truisms to offer any arguments to prove the importance of either of these branches of reading. To disregard them would be an exhibition of wisdom on a par with that of the traveller who, called upon to thread his path amid pitfalls and precipices, under but a dim and uncertain light, should reject the proffers of the friendly guide whom long experience had rendered familiar with the dangers of the way.

In procuring both of these classes of books, for the *smaller* school libraries, the considerations urged under a preceding head, in regard to "size," should not be lost sight of. And perhaps there is no department of literature that admits greater latitude of selection in this particular. We should equally steer clear of voluminous works and mere compends. If the Universal History of Rollin would be thought large, that of Tytler is entirely too brief and meagre. If Bancroft's United States is too elaborate, the smaller works of Hale, Winchester, and others of the same stamp, designed as class-books, would be insignificant. Gillies's or Mitford's Greece, Ferguson's Rome, and Gibbon's Decline and Fall, if erring on the one side, would be but illy replaced by the abridgments of Goldsmith.

The class of histories most desirable for the reader who is constrained to economize his time, and perhaps for all, are those which may be termed *Philosophies of History*—those in which the principal facts, and the philosophy deducible from *all* the facts, are clearly, briefly, and nervously recorded. History has been often defined "philosophy teaching by experience." If this definition is a true one, what need have we of

any more of the *experience*—in other words, the facts—than just sufficient to preserve our interest in the subject, and to carry strong and earnest conviction to the mind, that the *philosophy* set forth is clearly deducible from that experience, or those facts? A single problem demonstrates a principle in mathematics, as well as a hundred. In history as in painting, a few bold, vigorous strokes of the pencil give more vivid and direct impressions of great events, and the actors in them, than that elaborate art which finishes every thing, to the most inconsiderable object in the background—which exhibits as much care and skill in painting the shoe-ties, as the lineaments of the principal figures.

It need scarcely be observed that both of these departments of literature, in the school libraries, should be particularly rich in American subjects.

### 13. *Works of Fiction.*

Strong prejudices exist among a portion, and that the best portion, of our citizens, against works of fiction, on account of the concededly evil tendencies of a portion of them, the frivolity of others, and that dangerous fascination—especially to the young mind—which invests this entire class of productions. It cannot be denied that their perusal too often begets a distaste for more substantial literature; that their effect on the inexperienced and undisciplined mind is, to infuse into it romantic and exaggerated views, and to divorce it from the practical and real. The fancy of the novelist, like the machine horse of the Arabian tale, carries the rider to empyrean heights, and, amid the dazzling scenes spread out around and beneath him, the bewildered enthusiast, like Prince Firouz, sometimes finds himself unacquainted with the process by which his untiring courser can be compelled to descend again to earth. Surely it is not

denied to us to cultivate the imagination—an attribute bestowed upon us for wise and most merciful purposes; but this must not be done at the expense of the solider qualities of the mind. Its gorgeous structures should not be built on, or out of, the ruins of sober judgment.

Exaggeration, however, though a tendency, is not necessarily a property, of fiction. The substratum of every well-designed work of fiction is truth—truth to natural and moral laws. Novels may be, and frequently are, rich in not only geographical, scientific, and historical, but in moral and intellectual teachings. Byron, long afterwards, spoke of the intense interest excited in his mind, in relation to Venice and her scenery, by the vivid picturing of Mrs. Radcliffe. With the author of Waverley, we do not merely read of, but we seem to gaze with our natural eyes on, the most striking scenes of every land and clime. With what admiring wonder will the forest landscapes of Cooper be studied, when the Salvator or the Titian features of their originals shall alike have been effaced by the axe and the plough, and when their dark aboriginal groups shall find no longer a counterpart among the dwellers of earth!

In history too—in the philosophy of history—works of fiction frequently present the most striking delineations. History sometimes degenerates into fiction; fiction often rises to the dignity of history. It may well be questioned whether some of the novels of Scott do not give as good a picture of the times which they portray, and a juster conception of the principal characters, than the same author's history of Napoleon. When the novel is faithful to the spirit of history,—when it utters the same philosophy,—wherein does it fall short of the value of history? We read not the latter merely to glean its naked facts. If we did, a

chronological table were equally valuable, and certainly of far more rapid and convenient reference, than the pages of Livy, or Tacitus, or Hume.

The dramatic accompaniments and the minute delineations of the novel admit of even more vivid representations of characters and events than can be reached by severer history. The novelist is restrained by no cold laws of narration. He introduces his characters acting, breathing before us. Like the magician, he calls up the distant and the dead; group after group pass before us in his magic glass; and now the strained ear seems to catch the war-cry of crusading hosts, and now the fierce yell of the savages breaking forth from American forests.

Fiction, too, may both teach and impress high moral lessons. The Savior of mankind taught in parables or allegories. He taught truth by fiction. Rasselas, the Vicar of Wakefield, the inimitable Pilgrim's Progress, and every other truthful novel, has the same end. Rebecca preparing to leap from the dizzy turrets of Torquilstone, or surrounded by the fagots in the lists of Templestowe, teaches the lofty lesson as well as did the Roman Lucretia; and on what page of history will republican man find a simpler and nobler model than in Arnold Biederman? Shall we regard Cervantes in the light of the mere novelist, or the teacher, when, with one stroke of his mighty satire, in the guise of a romance, he clove down the chivalry of Spain at once and forever?

The design of these remarks is, to show that all works of fiction are not to be judged by that standard of immorality, frivolity, or sickly sentimentality which characterizes the mass of them; and that the admission of a few of them into the school libraries, in certain circumstances, and under judicious restrictions, is not improper. In the first place, they should only be admitted after the library is supplied, to an extent

which may be reasonably deemed ample, with works of a more sound and indispensable character; second, however large the library, their number should be limited; and, finally, they should be selected with rigorous discrimination, and only when their character is well known. When admitted into the libraries, no discreet and reflecting parent will fail to take care that they form not the first, nor, at any time, the principal reading of their children.

The number of novels and romances heretofore introduced into the libraries has not been large; but they usually have been of a secondary, or still lower, literary rank. The Scottish Chiefs, Thaddeus of Warsaw, and the Children of the Abbey, represent the best class of them. I have found also George Barnwell, Eliza Wharton, and even the Three Spaniards. I need not say that their removal has been invariably required.

### 14. *Poetry.*

Poetry and fiction are cognate in many of their means and aims. Both, too, have invoked the loftiest and best impulses of our nature; both have stooped to dabble their pinions in the mire of passion and sensuality. The influence of the former on mankind, in the early ages of the world, has been alluded to. We find it difficult to estimate it by any standard to be found in the popular susceptibilities of the present day. Our times are those of "calculators and economists." Reason has triumphed over imagination, and if she permits her to fly at all, it is with the clipped pinion of a bird imprisoned in an aviary.

But Poetry, though shorn of much of her direct mastery over the imagination and the passions, and no longer commanding the implicit credence of man, has not lost the power to delight and instruct him. It is common for men of gross and arithmetical understandings to ask what are its uses. It is common to

hear its introduction into the school libraries objected to, on the ground that it is frivolous, that it teaches nothing. The Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, on receiving a copy of the *Orlando* of Ariosto, asked the author "where he picked up all that trumpery."

Like fiction, Poetry may be made, and is often made, the vehicle of the most important truths, the most felicitous moral and physical delineations, the highest and most effective appeals to our fallen nature. What glimpses has she given us of the quenchless energies of a human soul, for good or for evil, in Dante's interview with the shade of Farinata; in Byron's dark portraitures of Cain and Manfred; in the chained-down, but unconquerable and all-defying man-god, the Prometheus of Æschylus and Shelley! How gloriously has she fanned the fires of devotion, and shadowed forth man's moral destiny, in the pages of Milton and Young, of Cowper and Hemans! How eloquently has she lent her powers to discourse of nature, in Virgil and Thomson! How sweetly has she sung of the joys and sorrows of simple life, of lowly man, in poets in other respects as dissimilar as Burns and Wordsworth! How nobly has she stood forth the patriot in the burning lyrics of Körner, Campbell, and our own Hopkinson! She has appeared the historian in Homer, Tasso, Camoëns, and all the epic poets; and she has become the politician with Butler and Trumbull. Some of the minor poets, like Darwin and Armstrong, have tamed her down to become a scientific lecturer! In all ages she has occupied the chair of rhetoric, cultivating the literary tastes, and improving the dialects of men. Apart from their other effects, the influence of the writings of Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso, in Italy; of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, in England; of Malherbe, Corneille, and Racine, in France; of Lessing, Schiller, and Göthe, in Germany, would, in this single particular, more than vin-

dicate the claims of poetry to a high rank among the valuable arts.

To even the utilitarian, if an intellectual one, if he counts the time and efforts of the mind, as he would those pertaining to the body, Poetry has two matchless recommendations. She produces stronger impressions than prose, and she does it in fewer words. In her more impassioned flights, all other species of composition, even oratory itself, sinks cold and powerless, compared with the thoughts and images which are thrown off, as it were, molten and burning, from the soul of the poet. In compression, in intellectual density, in the power of expressing volumes in sentences, sentences in words, poetry is to prose what carbon in the diamond is to carbon in the coal. How often do we find this exemplified amidst the sombre austerity of Young; the cold glitter of Pope; on every page of the "myriad-minded" Shakspeare! And how suddenly, and with what little apparent effort, does poetry penetrate to the very fountain-heads of the emotions! Like him who touches the electric conductor, we feel the shock instantaneous, invisible, and entirely beyond the power of any inviting or resisting volition. It runs like a fever-chill over the shivering nerves, gushes into uncontrollable tears in the eye, flashes up, in the dullest soul, into a sudden and irrepressible yearning for the great and lofty; and again and again is the same effect produced by a reperusal of the passage; and yet, if we turn back and attempt to analyze critically the secret of its power, we find but a few simple words, which every schoolboy uses—grouped, too, apparently, with as little artifice or design as that same schoolboy's prattle. They are like the enchanted towers in the "vale of St. John," which, when approached more nearly, revert to shapeless masses of unwrought granite. Read the Mason of Göthe; the words are simple and few, yet Saurin, ever "pointing to the open

grave," is not half so eloquent. Who ever rose from the perusal of Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey, or Bryant's* Thanatopsis, without feeling that he had drunk in the moral of all human philosophy? Milton's Comus, Gray's Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, the same author's wild and impassioned Bard, Burns's Cotter's Saturday Night, Kirke White's Ode to Genius, as well as innumerable detached passages which might be cited from all the higher poets, furnish examples, varying in intensity, of the same mystic power.†

The introduction of poetry into the school libraries should be placed under similar regulations with the introduction of fiction. It should form but a subordinate department, and be selected with the same scrupulous care. I am happy to say, however, this caution is less necessary in relation to American poetry. Fortunately, few of our American poets (or our other writers) have stooped to cater to depravity, to use the language and call up the associations of Cyprians. It is not necessary to inquire for *expurgated* editions of Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sigourney, Percival, Willis, Gould, etc.

* How deeply it is to be regretted that one who has few equals among his contemporaries, or throughout the world, should make no more elaborate efforts for his own and his country's literary fame!

† And among these *chef d'œuvres* I hesitate not to name the "Camp-Meeting Hymn," commencing, "O Thou in whose presence," the authorship of which is unknown to me. Whoever the author was, he was no stranger to the

> "—— ample pinions
> Which the Theban eagle bear;"

indeed, every line reminds us of the sublime fire of Pindar. Although this religious lyric partakes rather of the character of the ancient hymns to the gods, where love assumed something of a *material* and *human* form, yet he who has heard it uplifted by the voices of thousands, in the depths of an American forest, will feel that its beauties have not been exaggerated.

There is now scarcely a volume of poetry of any description in the common school libraries of the county.

### 15. *Miscellaneous Books.*

It is not proposed, under this head, to discuss the boundless range of literature not included in preceding divisions. It were impracticable, within reasonable limits, and it is unnecessary.

A well-selected library, for general use, should embrace a wide variety of topics. Men's tastes differ almost as much as their persons. Probably every one has decided mental predispositions or biases, developed or undeveloped; and if these are properly appealed to, the best and strongest qualities of the mind are called into action. Touch the wrong cord again and again, and we obtain no response. Defoe's Essay on Projects was the spear of Ithuriel to the undisclosed energies of Franklin. The creative genius of Shakspeare, the sublime majesty of Milton, even the vast and all-embracing philosophy of Bacon, might have failed to reach these. Malebranche had devoted himself to the cloister. An accidental opening of Des Cartes's Treatise on Man at once revealed, what perhaps was as little known to himself as to others, the germ of philosophy implanted in his mind. It is said that he dropped the book, sick and overcome with uncontrollable agitation! We have no right to aver that any work on the same topic, or any method of treating it, would have produced the same effects. Malebranche was already a ripe and deeply-read scholar, and doubtless familiar with philosophic systems. The waters of the rivers of Damascus may be as healing and limpid as those of the Jordan; but the latter can alone work the miracle. And it is well that it is so. It is well that mind has a natural channel through

which to pour its energies, and that it seeks that channel. A literature without individuality were like a landscape in the midst of a desert—one vast plain, stretching as far as the eye could reach in every direction, in dull and dreary uniformity and lifelessness. If there is one thing above all others, if we except genius, which should characterize a nation's literature, it is individuality.

Intellects of humbler dimensions, those to whom it is not given "the thought-throned mind to please," are nevertheless wrought upon proportionably, expanded, and called forth in their best spheres of action, by consulting their natural and strongest biases. Their best treasures are disclosed, be they of clay or be they of brass. And by suiting a great variety of tastes, multitudes are induced to *begin to read*, who otherwise would not. He who begins to read rarely finds his appetite pall for intellectual food. The circle of his curiosity, his taste, and his mental yearnings widens as he advances. He begins by climbing the molehill of knowledge, embraced by his trivial curiosity; he ends by surmounting Alpine heights.

There is another consideration of much importance. Literature should not only be selected from various individual sources, but, so far as practicable, from various *national* sources. Reading the literature of one nation exclusively, we become, as it were, a literary colony of that nation. Has this not been, does it not continue, too much our relation towards England? Our tastes and prejudices have been all imbibed from her. We allow not other nations to speak for themselves; we take only English testimony in relation to them. Has England been just to *our* literature, to *our* institutions, *our* history? What right have we to infer she will be more just to other nations? What American smatterer has not learned his English lesson

that the Frenchman is gay, polite, shallow, and false-hearted?—that the German is dull, superstitious, and mystified? It is true that, of late, it has become fashionable for English critics to speak in high terms of the literature of Germany, and to yield a tardy and yet imperfect measure of justice to the literature of France; but the impressions here spoken of are those which are derived from the great mass of English popular writers, her essayists until quite recently,—and yet a portion of them,—her dramatists, her novelists, and particularly her tale writers and newspaper critics.

There is no space here to expose such shallow absurdities. Because Böhme, or Werner, or Novalis mystifies; because Kant transcends the ordinary understanding; because, peradventure, there is a deeper and more reverential awe, a stronger congeniality for the vast, for the dimness and indistinctness which hover round the confines of the sublime, in the great German (Teuton) mind, than characterizes other nations, is it a necessary sequence that all Germans write only in a mystic jargon? The "gay and shallow" Frenchmen now lead their English neighbors in perhaps nearly every department of science and philosophy!

But this is not the point. Our quest is not to find the greatest, and then to bow ourselves down at the footstool of that greatest. We wrong ourselves, deeply wrong ourselves, in becoming the copyists or imitators of any. We want a national literature—an American literature. We labor under disadvantages in this particular. Pallas, when she sprang mature from the brain of Jove, could have brought none of those peculiarities acquired among the influences, the peculiar and moulding circumstances, of childhood. Our literature has had no infancy; it is an offset on the trunk of that of England; and if we confine ourselves to English authors, English models, English habits of

thought and methods of expression, our literature will always remain a mere offset.

He who would "drink deep" of literature should go back to her ancient fountains; and now that the barriers once interposed between them and the many, by a dead tongue, are broken down, there is no reason why all, possessing ordinary education, should not resort to them. It requires no higher training of the mind to understand the orations of Demosthenes than those of Pitt, or Fox, or Burke; yet neither of these equalled the great Athenian, or can scarcely be said to have approached his oration "On the Crown." Fox sifted his subject with the skill and logical acumen of a giant debater; Burke brought all the treasures of literature and genius, an imagination which "outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind," to adorn his; but if we would have a picture of a subject on which the Greek orator had once spent his force, we must turn to Burke's own description of the ravaged and utterly desolate Carnatic, after the wasting transit of Hyder Ali! The translated orations of Demosthenes, Cicero, and Æschines; the poems of Homer, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid; the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Sallust, and Cæsar, can now all be purchased for a few shillings! True, they are translations, and it is very common to decry translations. But even in perusing the originals, the thoughts come home to all ordinary scholars in the dress of their native tongue; and what ordinary scholar would claim that he could translate, even *to his own mind*, more accurately and forcibly than the able linguists—translators as celebrated, in some instances more celebrated, in literature, than their originals—who have given us the ancient writers in our own tongue? How many scholars, of any stamp, would be likely to drink in the beauty of the original

less diluted, than Milton, Dryden, Pope, Cowley, Addison, Swift, and others little less renowned in the catalogue of translators! I am far from recommending that the Greek and Roman classics should be placed in all of our school libraries; but when those libraries grow large, when they are called upon to administer to the intellectual wants of well-read and cultivated men, the classics will always find an appropriate place in them. Among the mutations of literature, the affectations and mannerisms of schools and cliques, these will form perpetual landmarks, as, amid the shifting sands, the pyramids tower unwasting in the old Egyptian sky.

Within the last few years there has been a great increase of popular expositions of moral, intellectual, and natural science. Science has laid aside the pedantry and the technicalities of the schools, and gone forth beyond the walls of universities, to instruct the Gentiles of the world of learning. True, many of these expositions fail in carrying out their design properly; some continue to soar too high; some sink so low as to repel by their puerility. And there is another very common mistake among the writers or compilers of these works; it is, to make them mere catalogues of facts, educible from, or explained by, the given science. With some such writers, Science assumes the charlatan air of a juggler displaying his mystic feats to gaping curiosity; with others, she becomes a writer of recipes, or a mere announcer of maxims. Science thus degrades herself to mere *art*. It is quite certain that we should never lose sight of the practical and useful; but we in reality better consult an extended utility, by not only giving facts and teaching processes, but by clearly setting forth the principles to which all facts or maxims are referable. The true popular exposition of a science is that which

explains its principles to the understanding of the common mind, teaching it to educe or refer *for itself* all facts which it may seek, or which come within the range of its observation. In such a point of view, Science never degrades herself by becoming the handmaid of man, his teacher and expounder in every art and handicraft, in every department of the realms of mind and matter. On the contrary, this was her destined vocation from the beginning. Science, or rather those laws which it developes, were created for man; for him were laid down the rules which guide the changes of the seasons, seed-time and harvest; for him every agent in nature performs its ceaseless functions; for him were established those wise and harmonious regulations which govern his physical, moral, and intellectual being. To know these is to be wise; to obey their behests is to be happy. Who can conceive of the grandeur of a civilization embracing such elements, diffusing this priceless knowledge through all the stratifications of society? What were the æsthetical civilizations of antiquity, the partial and aristocratic civilizations of modern Europe, compared with this?

The three great divisions of science, above named, in their widest sense, would perhaps include the subjects of nearly all books. Without assuming that they have been any thing more than alluded to, it is believed that greater space cannot be properly devoted to them, under the circumstances in which they are here discussed.

### 16. *Books for Poor-Houses and Jails.*

The inmates of poor-houses and jails are not excluded, by any express provision of the law, from sharing in the benefits of the school libraries; but, failing to acquire a legal residence in the districts

where they remain, they are placed on the footing of other transient persons, and consequently are not allowed to draw books.

The question arises, whether an exception should not be made, or an express provision added to existing regulations, to meet these cases. This question resolves itself into one of expediency, in relation to the prisoner; one of justice, as well as expediency, in relation to the pauper.

The ordinary citizen, who floats about society without acquiring any fixed residence, does so by his own voluntary act. Even if poor, and we can suppose him unavoidably driven about in quest of labor, there is nothing to prevent him from reading books drawn by those for whom he labors. When not engaged in toil, he is surrounded by the agreeable and virtuous influences of the family circle. At all events, he is brought into no contact, unless a voluntary one, with those demoralizing associations which call for constant counteraction. But he who, overwhelmed by irretrievable calamity, or prostrated by physical infirmity, seeks refuge from starvation or beggary within the walls of a poor-house, exercises just as little volition as the prisoner who is dragged to a jail. No myrmidon of the law is more imperative than hunger! No innocent citizen should forfeit any right or privilege which accrues to him as such, except by his own voluntary act; and surely we should not make his calamities the pretext of stripping him of the little that remains to him. It would be difficult to assign a reason why the aged, the halt, the blind, and the decrepit, should not be allowed that solace, amidst decay, suffering, and misery, which is held forth freely to the happy and affluent. And the homeless and usually orphan children, who are drawing their first impressions of life, their first lessons of character, amid the noisome sights

and sounds, the polluting atmosphere of a poor-house,* have an equally indisputable claim on our justice and on our humanity. They are as much the children of the republic as those who are born to competence or affluence, and their moral and mental wants are greater.† Shall we give to those who have, and withhold charity, nay, justice, from the needy? Is it the part of a parental government to administer to the physical wants of the youthful pauper, and leave him to a moral and mental destitution more appalling in its effects? Who that could choose for his own offspring would not rather consign them, early and unpolluted, to the dreadful death of starvation, than have them trained up in grovelling mental and moral ignorance, ripe and predisposed victims for the brothel, the prison, the gallows?

In relation to the prisoners in our jails, if innocent, books would prove a solace and a shield from the contaminating influences by which they are usually surrounded; if guilty, they would have a tendency to

* Perhaps I should say that I have no reason to doubt that the poor-house in this county is as well managed as any other in the state. But in all such establishments persons of weak and disordered mental and moral faculties, the openly vicious, and those who, if not decidedly vicious, are low and grovelling in their tastes and habits, must sometimes be admitted; and though proper police regulations may prevent overt acts of impropriety, it is impossible to prevent the young from daily witnessing and coming in contact with much that is calculated to sink and deprave them.

† Though the length of this special report has deterred me from enlarging on the topic in my general report, it will be readily seen that the reasons here adduced will apply with equal force in favor of providing good, at least *decent* schools for pauper children, and not leaving them, as is now done, to the teaching of some fellow-pauper, unless such pauper teacher can obtain a certificate of qualification from the town or county superintendent of common schools.

soften and reclaim them. Books surely would prove more profitable companions to either class than cards and the other implements of games of chance. The jail in this county is frequently empty of prisoners, and rarely contains more than two or three. Under such circumstances, I have seen no objection to allowing the prisoners the use of the books of the school district in which the jail is situated. (The library is a large one, and usually contains perhaps fifty books beyond the circulation.) I have, therefore, procured the consent of the proper authorities in the district to such an arrangement, and the engagement of the jailer to exchange and take care of the books.

The loan of its books is entirely gratuitous on the part of the district, and might, at any time, be discontinued; and in many counties the number of prisoners and other circumstances would render such an arrangement impracticable or improper. The supply should therefore come from some other source.

I would respectfully suggest to the superintendent that he recommend to the legislature an amendment to our school laws, requiring the supervisors of the several counties to raise the sum of $ , as other school moneys are now raised by them, which, with an equal sum paid in the same manner and from the same fund with the common school library moneys, shall be appropriated to the purchase of a library for each poor-house and jail in such several counties of the state.* I would further suggest that the above blank be filled with a minimum sum of not less than $6,50 cents for each jail, and $13,00 for each poor-house;† such sums to be increased, in some fixed

* With some separate provision for cities.

† These sums (being doubled by the public money) are believed to be sufficient to purchase at least twenty-five volumes

ratio, in proportion as the inmates of these establishments have exceeded the average number of for the last two years. To insure a uniformly judicious and economical expenditure of such moneys, I recommend that the selection of these books be given to the state superintendent; that the boards of supervisors of counties be required to provide for the safe-keeping and repair of such libraries; that sheriffs or keepers of poor-houses be made responsible for losses or injuries, unless they show, to the satisfaction of the board of supervisors, that such losses were beyond their reasonable prevention or control, in which case the county shall bear the loss; that the sheriff, or his jailer, and keepers of poor-houses, be required to act as librarians, and, as such, be subject to such rules and regulations as the superintendent of common schools may prescribe.

### 17. *On the Propriety of publishing a Catalogue of recommended Books.*

The selection of books for the common school libraries is given to the trustees of school districts; but the state superintendent, and, by the provisions of the act of 1843, the county superintendents, have power to decide against books remaining in the libraries which are deemed improper. Although it is notorious that the state superintendent has often exerted this power, and although, in the case of this county at least, it is one, the necessary exercise of which has never been shrunk from, I never yet have heard the propriety of

and a case, for a jail, and fifty volumes and a case for a poor-house, of the most suitable kind of books for such purposes.

Since writing the above I have ascertained that the supervisors of the county of Monroe, at a recent session, appropriated $25 to the purchase of a library for the poor-house of that county.

its being so vested in a single instance called in question. The good sense of our people has not failed to show them that, to prevent frequent abuses, a supervisory jurisdiction of this kind must exist somewhere, and they have seemed content to leave it in the hands of a class of officers chosen especially to administer the laws generally in relation to our common schools.

Trustees who purchase books for districts are frequently men who, notwithstanding the good sense and public spirit which may belong to them as men and as school officers, possess no extended acquaintance with books. In by far the greater portion of instances, as might be expected, the books which they purchase have not been previously read by them. They are taken on the specious representations of the vender, sometimes the itinerant vender, who fills his case with those inferior productions which, having outlived their popularity, or never having had any popularity, can be purchased by him for a mere trifle. These are sometimes disposed of on the condition that, if disapproved of by the state or county superintendent, they may be returned. Should they be so disapproved, the privilege is secured, on the *annual* return of the seller, of exchanging trash for what may prove worse trash! It would be unjust to say that the practice of crowding these worthless publications on trustees is characteristic of all itinerant sellers; and it would be less than justice to leave it to be inferred that such practices are confined to them. A very large number of books so published, if erring in no point sufficiently to call for the exercise of a power which should always be so delicately wielded as that of removal, are still far from being of that literary stamp which are best calculated to elevate and refine the popular taste.

The regents of the university, in appropriating funds for the purchase of academic libraries, require the

trustees of these institutions to select the books from a catalogue which is furnished by the regents, or, if others are desired, a list of them must first be submitted to and approved of by the regents. The function of these officers is analogous to that of the state superintendent, and no reason is perceived why the same right to control the purchase of books should not be vested in one head of department that there is in the other. Substantially, there is no wide disparity in the right now vested in each; but there is this distinguishing feature—one manifests its power before such purchase, the other subsequently. It is not difficult to decide that prevention is always better than cure.

I am not prepared to recommend that the superintendent of common schools shall assume, authoritatively, to control the selection of the books admitted into the school libraries. It might not be proper, and I do not believe it necessary. If the mere opinion of that functionary were known in relation to particular books, there can be but little doubt that it would have great, paramount weight, with those feeling diffidence in their own ability to decide. All discreet and right-minded men would regard with proper respect the deliberately expressed opinion of the superintendent. A list or catalogue of approved, and, if thought expedient, disapproved books, published by such authority, would, it is believed, soon, and without a particle of coercion, guide the purchases made in almost every school district in the state. In regard to the disapproved list, at least, those disposed to be contumacious could not but know that, if advice failed, authority could be employed to enforce it.

The task of preparing such a catalogue would be a most responsible, a most onerous one. But he who enters upon the office of superintendent of common

schools voluntarily assumes the full measure of this responsibility; for there is not a day, during his term of office, in which he may not be called upon, in the ordinary discharge of his official duties, to decide upon the propriety of admitting any book which is to be found in print into the school libraries. The preparation of such a catalogue would doubtless consume time. It could not be anticipated that it would be made full in the first instance. Additions could be from time to time, or annually, made to it. The most profound and erudite reader could scarcely decide, without reperusal, on many of the works already read by him without reference to so particular and important an end. And supposing his examination to be brought down to the present day, it would doubtless require no small degree of diligence to keep pace with the daily advance of literature. Great as would be this whole task, however, it is one which could be met, particularly were the superintendency of common schools disconnected from the labors and duties of the office of secretary of state. Inferior capacities and inferior energies would start back from a task so Augean. But he who, with moral and intellectual capacities adequate to appreciate the responsibilities and influences of the station,—influences to the young, to the future, and to our country, compared with which that wielded by whole generations of governors dwindles into insignificance;—he who, feeling the entire weight of this responsibility, nevertheless dares to assume it, should not weigh his time nor his efforts by the ordinary standard of official industry. We stand, unless Hope has mistaken her own intensity for prophetic foresight, in the very transition era of popular education, popular intellectual and moral civilization. He to whom it is given to lead in this work should superadd to the industry of the official the zeal of

the philanthropist, and, if need be, the self-sacrificing spirit of the martyr.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY S. RANDALL,
*Co. Superintendent Common Schools, Cortland County.*

CORTLAND VILLAGE, *Nov.* 1, 1843.

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